

Teaching Yoga In Addiction Recovery A Social Work Perspective

Thesis submitted by

Mark Griffiths
B.A. B.S.W. (University of Melbourne)

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Declaration

By my signature below, I declare the following:

- a. except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of myself alone;
- b. the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part to qualify for any academic award;
- c. the contents of this thesis are the result of work carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program.

Signed

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Mark Griffiths B.A. B.S.W. University Of Melbourne.

Date

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Abstract

This thesis sets out to explore the personal and social challenges of teaching of yoga in addiction recovery from a social work perspective. It is informed by an action research perspective using a number of methods of data collection that included interviews with four yoga teachers, two focus groups with other yoga teachers and workers in addiction recovery, the personal experience of the researcher teaching yoga in an addiction recovery detoxification unit and a literature review that includes extensive examination of all existing known yoga and meditation programs used in addiction recovery and corrections.

The research questions were focused on whether yoga could be applied as a complementary therapy within social work and how yoga assists people in addiction recovery. It also asked what programmatic requirements are needed for a constructive yoga program that addresses the needs of yoga teachers in this field and the participants they are trying to assist through yoga who are often marginalized. The emerging themes and issues from the data and literature were explored and triangulation was used to draw one conclusion that was found consistently across all methods used. This was the importance of *kriya* yoga, or the yoga of action, to achieve results with yoga as a complementary therapy. *Kriya* yoga has three elements: a commitment to regular and dedicated practice, allowing time to reflect on how this practice is affecting your life, and having faith in the yoga process.

Underlying this notion of *kriya* yoga is the importance of the yoga teacher-student relationship and the value of a yoga community that supports the student in their commitment to practice. Recovery from addiction is viewed as a journey involving many stages in which the yoga student deals with relapses. The exemplary yoga programs are forms of *karma* yoga or the yoga of selfless action. The development of a karma yoga network that forms an on-line bridge between the yoga communities and addiction recovery services is suggested by the research as one way forward in promoting yoga as a complementary therapy in addiction recovery.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to establish whether there is a role in social work for yoga. As a yoga teacher and social worker, the thesis explores my own tentative steps to find a connection between these two aspects of my professional identity. The human service area where I taught yoga for this thesis was in addiction recovery. In my social work practice, the corrections services area looms large in my previous and current practice experience. Addiction recovery plays a major part in helping offenders cease criminal activity. For this thesis, I conducted focus groups with yoga teachers and health professionals working in addiction recovery and correctional services to explore the challenges, issues and benefits of teaching yoga in these service areas. I interviewed four additional yoga teachers who were not able to attend the focus groups, three of whom had previous experience teaching yoga in correctional settings. This thesis is also a record of my research journey to deal with my own personal cravings¹ through yoga and discover a new direction using yoga teaching in social work.

Is there a place in social work for yoga? Why is this relevant? There are yoga teachers providing classes in addiction recovery and correctional services who are not social workers. Couldn't I view my yoga as something separate but *complementary* to the social and medical interventions taking place in these services. Can yoga be situated centrally within my social work practice? What impact has yoga practice had upon my social work practice and what does my social work experience bring to my practice as a yoga teacher in these fields?

¹ See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the definitions of addictions and cravings. In this thesis I describe cravings as a milder form of dependence, along a continuum where addiction generally describes a more extreme form of physiological and psychological dependence. While I do not think I have any addictions, I have certainly experienced cravings for external objects and experiences.

The findings of this study primarily reflect the drawing together of themes and knowledge gained from the available published literature on the topic, the two focus groups with yoga teachers and health professionals, individual interviews with experienced yoga teachers not able to attend the focus groups, and my own personal and practice experience.

Overview of the Thesis

Chapter One provides an introduction by proposing a dialectical approach to the topic of a social work perspective on teaching yoga in addiction recovery. This research is based upon the real experiences of yoga teachers in addiction recovery services. Then follows separate chapters on each area of the topic, namely social work, addiction recovery and use of yoga from a dialectical viewpoint to situate the thesis in this conceptual framework. The limited focus in this thesis on the yoga teacher's viewpoint is rationalized because of the importance of their role in program delivery. An abbreviated history of how I arrived at this topic in the research journey is provided.

Chapter Two, Yoga as a spiritual practice in social work, examines the emerging post-modern, non-sectarian use of spirituality in social work and the application of transpersonal theory which recognizes the importance of what Ken Wilber describes as the internal, intentional domain of reality (Walsh 1998). This domain includes all our conscious and unconscious internal thinking and feeling experiences but also includes higher or alternative levels of consciousness obtained through spiritual practices like yoga and meditation. I propose that yoga is a spiritual practice that can compliment other social work and health or educational interventions and has significant benefits that can flow into other domains of reality (Wilber 1998). A social work perspective on yoga can provide a framework for the operation of yoga at an individual, group and community level to provide a comprehensive yoga program model with the potential to provide a holding environment in which transformation can take place. I explore how yoga and social work have influenced each other in my professional life.

Chapter Three on Methodology describes my research journey in more detail and the qualitative research methods used which combined heuristic, focus groups and dialogic methods within action research. The central research questions are identified and, using Ken Wilber's 1998 definition of valid empirical transpersonal knowledge and Dick's use of triangulation in action research methodology (Dick 2000), I am able to identify key findings that emerge from all three research techniques used, namely the focus groups, one to one interviews and my own personal experience as a yoga teacher and student. The details of each research strategy are provided and the individuals involved in the focus groups and interviews are described via pseudonyms created for this research purpose.² The actual findings from the research are included in the three following chapters. The limitations of the research are identified in respect to the objectives of the research, data collection and interpretation and the limited nature and type of participants.

In Chapter four on Yoga and addiction, I examine the various theories of addiction and how they relate to the yoga theory and practice of addiction recovery. Taking a broad definition of addiction as an extreme form of the common human tendency to crave pleasurable objects or experiences and cover up negative feelings, I demonstrate, in tabular form, how yoga theory relates to all existing addiction theories including harm minimization. The emergence of the body therapy movement in psychotherapy and the neglect of the body in social work are examined to highlight the application of yoga as a bodily discipline that can compliment other social work interventions, given the definitive place of asana or bodily postures in how yoga is practiced, particularly in the western world. The notion of yoga as a positive addiction³ or compulsive helping activity, which aims to reduce reliance on a negative lifestyle, is further explored together with the importance of yoga's ethical base providing a foundation to the exploration of the personal shadow or dark side of the recovery process. The stages of change model of addiction

² My two senior yoga teachers, Mark Gibson and Clare Fleming were happy to be identified by name.

³ See Chapter 4 for further discussion on Bill Glasser's concept of positive addictions (Glasser 1976)

recovery helps to explain how yoga operates at different stages of recovery from exposure of a person to a seeding class in the pre-contemplation phase to participation in regular classes during action phases, including dealing with relapse and the experienced paradox of a committed yoga student and/or teacher with cravings or addictions.

Chapter five, Yoga and transformation, looks at the process issues of how yoga has the potential to transform a craving or addiction. The definitions, history and actual meaning of yoga and transformation are further explored. Patanjali's three elements of '*kriya*' yoga or the yoga of action first stated in Book 2 of the yoga *sutras* is explained as the research seems to point to discipline, self study and trust in the path to be the essential core needed to enable the practitioner of yoga to address a craving or addiction (Feuerstein 1989). The limitations of yoga in being able to contribute to transforming an addiction are identified, particularly the intensity and level of commitment required by the participant. While almost any creative endeavour can qualify as a yoga practice in Feuerstein's definition of 'practice' in *kriya* yoga, the centrality of bodily postures, breathing exercises, relaxation and meditation techniques to yoga teaching in the West is highlighted. The research in the focus groups and interviews found that the commitment and personal qualities the yoga teacher brings to the transformation effort around engagement, dedication, reliability and dependability are critical to the transformation effort.

Chapter six, Programmatic issues, looks at what is required for a yoga program to be successful in the addiction recovery and correctional setting. Despite many obstacles placed in their path, the key concept explored to explain the success of some programs, is the notion of *karma* yoga or the yoga of selfless service. All the continuing successful programs are operated by individuals or organizations who are exemplary '*karma yogis*'. *Karma* yoga was first described as a transformative path of action in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It is a direct challenge to the prisoner's code and, what may be called the general social code operating in western capitalist society, the ethic of 'looking after No 1'. There is a danger in this finding that there is some special quality in these individuals that 'ordinary' yoga teachers will feel the level of

commitment required is beyond them. However, as the research shows, many “ordinary” yoga teachers have been able to operate successful programs in addiction recovery and corrections for defined periods of time, often in very difficult circumstances.

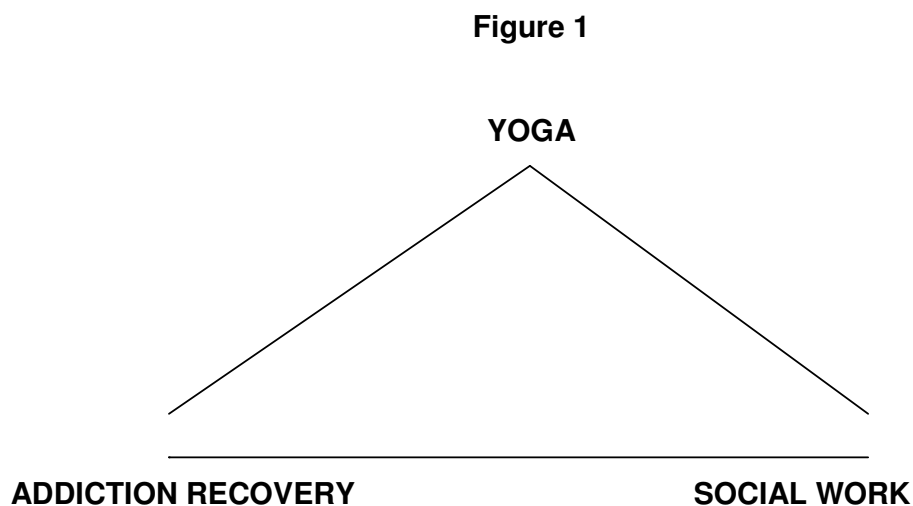
As well as drawing upon the practice experience recorded in the focus groups and from individual yoga teachers operating in correctional services, I examine the recorded experiences of the key programs around the globe, particularly, the prison ashram movement created by Bo Lozoff and offshoots such as the Prison Phoenix Trust in the United Kingdom and Canada, the *Vispassana* Meditation method as taught by Goenka, the Transcendental Meditation or T.M. movement, various 12-step yoga combined programs such as the Kripa foundation, the “Free Inside” yoga program and the complimentary and alternative therapy movement in the west and the evidence of yoga teachers including social workers who have operated once-off programs to compliment other interventions with particular populations. The common experience of dealing with program boundary and social control issues, with the specific medical and social needs of this population, such as the physical impact of medical withdrawal management regimes on yoga practice, program isolation, and the problems of financial support, are examined. These problems are reflected in operating many programs in these service areas, not just yoga programs. The notion of a karma yoga network of yoga teachers is explored as one possible way of moving forward in providing community organization and advocacy, practical support and effective administration and training to specific yoga programs in this field. James Barber’s model of progressive social work practice is proposed as a useful social work perspective on creating a community organization around the karma yoga network.

Finally, in the concluding chapter seven, the key findings discovered from dialogue, experience and discussion with research participants on teaching yoga in this field are outlined. While the research was confined to capturing the views and opinions of interested yoga teachers and health professionals in addiction recovery and corrections, it is recognized that further research

should examine the impact of yoga programs on participants and the views of the students and other professionals in the arena such as custodial and educational staff. The research may contribute to better understanding of what is needed for more effective delivery of yoga programs in these fields of service delivery. I see the research as mapping out a direction in which I want to head as a yoga teacher and social worker which is to develop an effective yoga program in this service delivery area, encompassing support of the individual student, regular group classes and the development of a self-help community of support for teachers and students.

Thinking Dialectically

In this first chapter I wish to use dialectics as a way of thinking about the three central concepts that contain the topic under discussion. Dialectics helps to focus on the underlying changes and interactions that are going on between aspects of reality below the surface of appearances. The three concepts that will help to explain and situate this thesis can be shown below in figure 1.⁴



Dialectics is a conceptual tool for analyzing how something works. In this thesis, dialectics is used to explain how yoga, social work and addiction are

⁴ I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Jacques Boulet and my supervisor Bob Pease in developing this conceptual framework and the use of dialectics as a conceptual device to understand the topic.

internally and externally related. To think dialectically about this thesis is to claim that the best way to understand the area under discussion is to explore the interconnections between the concepts, understand the movement in time and evolution of each concept, identify the trends, conflicts or contradictions driving change in each area as part of an ongoing dialogue that may contribute to the growth of effective yoga practice in social work.(Ollman 2003)

Dialectics aims to distinguish between reality and pseudo-reality. In yoga reality comes to be known through the purposeful and active transformation of reality through practice. Dialectics also claims practice is the only way reality can be known. Pseudo-reality examines external appearances. For example, yoga may appear to a casual observer as “a bunch of stretches”. Yoga can be fetishised as a product in our health and spiritually conscious marketplace that creates the “body beautiful”. Yoga types or styles can become frozen in time and in the consciousness of practitioners rather than seen as a process that grew out of something in specific circumstances and is continuing to evolve and develop. The dialectical method aims to expose what is hidden behind the phenomena of current yoga practice in this field of human service delivery. (Ollman 2003)

I hope to bring to the surface the theory in use (Argyris and Schon 1974) and inner contradictions embedded in the everyday actions of teaching yoga in the addiction field. Dialectics suggests that many of the real issues are hidden by layers of taken for granted actions. For example, the question just underneath the surface of the focus group discussions and my own daily practice of yoga is “why do yoga in the first place?” The focus group methodology allows the practitioners the opportunity to talk about some of the real issues of teaching yoga in this area. There is the dialectic of the yoga teacher as a student of yoga and the struggle of many yoga teachers to address their own craving or addiction problems through yoga practice. It would be naïve to think that yoga teachers are immune to the craving experience⁵ and many have written about

⁵ It needs to be stated that the expectations for employment in the addiction recovery field do act as a disincentive for practitioners to self disclose about any recent personal craving or

their struggles with addiction. For every serious student of yoga there is the challenge of the commitment to daily practice, because, in yoga theory, the assumption is that the daily practice of yoga and meditation creates the potential for transformation and the overcoming of cravings.

John Rowan proposes a cyclical dialectical research method in participatory action research (Rowan 1981). Applied to my topic, his approach suggests that I become a yoga teacher in social work experiencing all the dilemmas that this entails. This leads to some form of project endeavour developed out of all the false starts and dead ends of the research experience, which, in this thesis, became the focus groups and interviews conducted with health practitioners and yoga teachers in addiction recovery and correctional services. The interviews, focus groups and my personal diaries, kept over the last four years, are my primary research tools that help me make sense of the work and enable me to finally communicate my findings to the field via this thesis.

Dialectics requires that I start with the “concrete” reality of my experience of being a yoga teacher and social worker, the experience of others in this field obtained through the research, and apply any useful concepts found in the literature of yoga, social work and addiction recovery to that reality to investigate practice experience. A yoga class taught in a drug detoxification or correctional facility may appear on the surface to be not much more than an exercise class, something that gives the residential or custodial staff a partial breather from the relentless supervision demands for staff of the resident participants or provides relief from boredom for participants in the unit. Dialectics requires that I examine that class from the point of view of how it arose, developed, fits into the overall programmatic response of the service of which it is a small part. Dialectics replaces the notion of a thing called a “yoga class” and requires that I view the class as a process with a history and possible futures evolving from a series of relationships with the inner and outer experience of the yoga teacher, teacher to students and visa versa,

addiction problems. In the recovery unit in which I taught yoga, it was expected that all staff and volunteers were “addiction free” for at least 2 years before commencing employment.

teacher to unit management and, in my case, to my allegiance to my emergent identity as a social worker practicing yoga in this field (Ollman 2003).

Dialectics starts with the totality of the three elements of my topic and then moves to examine the parts leading to a deeper understanding of the totality. These relationships are traced through four dimensions. Firstly, in normal logical thinking, “things” are either identical or different. Applying dialectical thinking, I am asked to look deeper into this relationship to see how elements of my yoga practice already exist in my understanding of the experience of effective social work practice (Ollman 2003). For example, the challenge of engaging participants requires the social worker to start where the participant is at, just as we find that teaching yoga in this field poses a challenge and requires a similar capacity in the yoga teacher. A progressive social work model involves the use of case, group, and community work (Barber 1995). Similarly, effective karma yoga programs contain these three elements. Yoga’s focus on the body as a transformational tool can be seen to parallel emergent trends in social work, which are discovering the place of the body in rehabilitation or therapy (Tangenburg 2002). My use of meditation in daily life has been extremely helpful in centering myself in preparation for facilitating group conferences⁶ in social work.

Secondly, things like yoga are seen as separate entities but, in dialectical thinking, yoga does not have a separate existence from its surroundings and also consists of non-yoga elements such as the yoga teacher’s effort to “create surroundings” for the yoga class such as acting to eliminate distractions for participants, providing some appropriate background music, use of yoga props, the method and reliability of payment for the yoga teacher (if any), the students and their circumstances, the teacher and any interference affecting the teaching from events happening outside the class. All these things and others can affect how the yoga class operates and

⁶ A group conference is a facilitated meeting between a young offender, their victims and their respective communities of support together with involved professionals such as the police and legal representatives to address the offence in a restorative manner.

impacts on the participants.⁷ Even a thing called a yoga class is a twentieth century phenomenon as, prior to this century, most yoga appears to have been imparted on an individual student to teacher basis.

Thirdly, yoga, social work and addiction cannot be understood without knowing where they have come from, current relations and where they are likely to develop. Finally, the way we conceptualize reality has an impact upon our reality. This is clearly seen in history when a theory takes hold and influences the behaviour of people. In yoga, beliefs and the concept of self-study play a significant role in practice.

Thinking dialectically requires that we take the world as it presents to us as our starting point and from this I have abstracted a theoretical construct of using yoga in addiction recovery in social work practice. Each aspect is part of the process that appears and develops over time. They can also be looked at under seven levels of generality. There is:

1. The individual yoga teacher or addict and his/her situation. Does yoga help the person address their health and other life problems?
2. The other people in and outside the class, and the activities they undertake or do not undertake in such a yoga class. For example, do they support or disrupt the class and undermine the impact of the class?
3. The outcomes from teaching yoga in an addiction recovery or corrections setting. For example, from a correctional management or addiction recovery perspective, a key outcome is whether the conduct of the yoga class helps in the management of participants reducing stress levels or at least not increasing their anxiety levels. The impact of yoga on reducing recidivism and addiction would also be recognized but a class that increased their anxiety or stress levels would not operate for long⁸.
4. There is the perspective on yoga of the human services system labeled addiction recovery or corrections. Its role as one form of complimentary therapy in addiction recovery and as a recreational activity or more serious

⁷ Derezotes (2000) reports that the Adolescent sex offenders found that external “goof-offs” in the class were distracting and interfered with their concentration.

⁸ See BBC News item “Yoga Classes ‘provoke’ prisoners” date 8/3/2005 about high security Ringerike jail near Oslo in Norway that stopped holding yoga classes after it found them to aggravate strong reactions from deep breathing exercises.

pursuit by prisoners can be examined. What does complementary mean in this context? Does it mean it is less important than the primary interventions? Does the system support these activities or simply tolerate them or even ignore them and consider them irrelevant? Does it quietly undermine them through benign neglect? Are security and other political or management objectives always given greater priority than any rehabilitation program, which is provided in a window dressing or piecemeal fashion? Or is it given high priority and valued for its contribution to the objectives of the service?

5. There are subsystems within each system such as the perspective of the yoga teachers or the direct service staff who deliver services with participants in the yoga class. In this thesis I explore some of the views of both groups but I have not included the views of the participants or management⁹. Presumably their views would be different from those expressed in this thesis and would have some relevance to the impact of any yoga program.
6. There is the perspective of the participants in their various stages of recovery leading to the absence of addiction. For example, someone in the pre-contemplation or contemplation stage of recovery would experience yoga differently from a more motivated yoga student using yoga in the preparation, action or maintenance stages of recovery. When I use the word “addiction”, I am referring to a broader definition used in the literature for any activity or behaviour that is repetitive and has significant negative consequences for the person and others affected by their activity or behaviour. I am using a yoga approach to addiction that regards it as an extreme form of our natural tendency for attraction to pleasurable activities and behaviours¹⁰ (Bailey 1997, p. 64-5). The focus in this research is on the use of yoga in the recovery process, and how people use yoga in their journey of recovery. Is the way out of addiction dependant on dealing with causal factors that created the addiction, if these can be determined, or

⁹ See Chapter 3 on Research Methodology and the section on “the research journey” where efforts to research participants did not receive approval from research committees in the bureaucracy. This research is confined to yoga teachers as they play the key role in delivering the yoga program.

¹⁰ For a more detailed discussion of the meaning of addiction refer to Chapter 4 of this thesis.

can other intervening variables related to positive health and recovery be more important to recovery? There are physiological aspects, which may contribute to addiction, and there is the natural world of the human body with all its injuries, ailments, frailties, dependencies and capacities, including a spiritual capacity within the human consciousness, that yoga aims to help the addict experience¹¹.

7. Finally, there is the perspective of the participants themselves including the yoga teachers. Does yoga appeal to the participants? Can yoga be adapted to the physical condition of people in recovery from addiction and still be a powerful therapeutic tool in their recovery? Is the adjustment to yoga so great as to reduce its effectiveness for those people who make use of yoga? (Ollman 2003).

Perhaps, the requirements for transformation in yoga are too difficult for most participants to master, which may make its application limited. Is the commitment expected from yoga teachers in this field also too onerous? Alternatively, does the style of yoga taught and program expectations need to adapt more to the individual in recovery and their stage of recovery?

While all these perspectives needs to be considered to gain a better understanding of my subject, I am primarily exploring the yoga teachers' perspective and my own experience as a yoga student and teacher who is a social worker in corrections. There are practical limitations that led to this focus which are explained in Chapter 3 on research methodology. A possible justification for this narrow focus is a view within yoga that the initiator is really working on themselves and the teaching flows from their own experience, which aims to inspire their students. Within social work and psychiatric terminology, the yoga teacher is acting as a kind of friend and role model for the student and creating a mentoring relationship with the student in a "holding environment" (Applegate and Bonovitz 1995 p 85-119) in which the

¹¹ See Canda and Furman (1999) for an operational definition of spirituality Pg 41-60. See Chapter 2 of this thesis for a discussion of the place of spirituality in social work practice and in addiction recovery.

learning can take place. To quote from Charles Bates from *Ransoming the Mind*:

“In order for things to change, we have to change. Space for transformation to appear must be invented. So any change that takes place is the willingness to invent a space where transformation can emerge. This is the goal of the masters. They may indeed have an idea about the direction they would like the aspirant to take, but rather than attempt to force him into a mold, they create the circumstances by which reality can be known”. (Bates 1986 p. 29)

A similar point is reflected in the rehabilitative ideal where the people providing the programs are the program and the line staff are the most influential people in the delivery of rehabilitation. How they have dealt with authority in their own life and set limits will be reflected in how they impose limits on their charges and what interpersonal relationships they establish will be dependant upon their understanding of relationship formation and development. So there is some justification in starting an exploration of yoga's potential in this field with the yoga teachers and their own experiences.

Finally, I have tried to apply what Ira Progoff calls the principle of mutuality of form, where the researcher listens to the thesis and engages in a genuine dialogue with it, as if it were a person or artwork (Progoff 1973). The thesis is an attempt to find a destiny through the act of living the practice of yoga as a social worker. Progoff describes the modern journey of adulthood as a series of initiations where the person finds their way through the actual events of life rather than through any formal initiation or ritual. This thesis is a personal record of my experience with yoga as a student and teacher trying to recover from cravings and my perspective on the future place for yoga in social work practice.

The Research Journey

I wish to explain how I traveled along this path and became a social work researcher interested in yoga and addiction. I commenced this thesis in may 1999 with the vague intention of researching mid-life crisis in adult males. My interest grew from my own marital breakdown and discovery and participation

in the men's movement via active involvement in a men's therapy group and as secretary of a Victorian Men's Health and Well-being Association. I was invited to participate in an undergraduate course on men and masculinities at RMIT University conducted by my MSW supervisor at RMIT University, Bob Pease. My involvement in yoga commenced in 1991 when I had hamstring problems from long distance running.

As` I was working to establish an umbrella organization to represent the interests of men in human services I found that my interest in men's movement politics began to lessen as I perceived that the men trying to transform others were badly in need of their own medicine. My interest in yoga was being strengthened by daily practice and involvement in a two year Iyengar¹² teacher training course. Yoga seemed to provide me with a foundation that I could rely upon when all else fell away. I visited India in April 2001 to complete a 2-week yoga intensive and experienced a culture where spirituality was still alive.

In social work I had focused upon implementing restorative justice conferencing for young offenders for three years from 1995. While conferencing was very successful in addressing offending issues, it could not deal with ongoing addiction problems that contributed to offending, except via referral to addiction recovery services. I had tried without success to persuade my previous employer to extend the existing program into the adult court. So I decided to put together a viable adult court diversion pilot program that would include restorative justice conferencing, weekly yoga sessions and group and individual support for participants. It was to be operated by myself and an action research project on the program was contained in the initial research proposal.

¹² Iyengar Yoga is a style of yoga developed by B.K.S Iyengar of Pune, India. Iyengar yoga emphasizes precision in the execution of postures and meticulous anatomical alignment using props to allow correct posture. Iyengar yoga is very popular in the West as a result of the pioneering work of BKS Iyengar on the therapeutic impacts of yoga, his many books and the many western yoga teachers he has inspired to create yoga schools.

I applied for research ethical approval through the RMIT University and the Department of Justice in Victoria, which must approve any research conducted on people involved in the court system. Program pamphlets were printed and discussion held with very senior magistrates. The Department of Justice Research Ethics committee requested further information on a number of research strategies being proposed, while RMIT University approved the proposal subject to the approval of the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice would not approve the proposal until the court 'gave the go ahead'. In August 2001 formal notification was received that the court did not endorse the research project. This was very disappointing for me partly as I had invested about \$1500 in pamphlet development for the program. As a result I dropped the court auspice for the program and for the next 12 months operated as a yoga teacher, teaching in yoga studios, gymnasiums, workplaces, and continued my weekly class at St Vincent's hospital drug detoxification centre. In 2002 I had also operated a free yoga program at a local church in Brunswick with the idea to attract marginalized people and people in recovery from addictions that had returned to the community. Four classes were conducted per week and gradually a dedicated small group of students developed around this service. However, when I eventually ceased this service, as it was not financially viable to continue, I felt I had let the students down.

It was at this time that my friend Gerald Frape came up with the idea of facilitating focus groups with yoga teachers who have experience in this field. As well as being very experienced with focus group facilitation, Gerald had additional contacts across many yoga programs and schools and meditation centers. The focus groups were conducted in August 2002 and the research methodology required me to facilitate and co-lead two focus groups and conduct numerous individual interviews with a mixture of yoga teachers and health professionals who have worked in the addiction recovery and correctional services exploring the issues of teaching yoga in these fields. The focus groups were recorded, transcribed and analysis was completed on key themes that emerged from the recorded discussions. I also videotaped two interviews with two of my senior yoga teachers, one of whom had taught yoga

in a Melbourne correctional facility for female prisoners. I continue to keep a daily journal in which I have recorded many of my personal yoga and meditation experiences. In March 2003, I recommenced full time social work as senior group conference convenor at Jesuit Social Services, and stopped teaching yoga to complete the writing of this thesis.

My personal reflection on the false starts and attempted programs was that I needed this time to address my own cravings before I was seriously capable of providing a credible yoga program. My continued struggles with cravings created another crisis for me in this thesis. How could I teach in this field whilst I still experienced cravings that I couldn't control? I realized that dialectics required me to live the issues, "allowing the contradictions to emerge" (Pease 1987 p. 93).

Since completing my empirical research, a phenomenological study has been conducted on eight people using yoga during recovery from addiction (Holthaus 2004). A number of these people were yoga teachers and serious practitioners with experiences akin to my own, except their addictions were to alcohol. This study has reinforced many of my own experiences and those other participants involved in this study that yoga and meditation are not some panacea or magic bullet that cures you of addiction. It is far more like a journey of recovery and yoga and meditation can be a very useful tool to accompany the practitioner along the road to recovery.

Chapter 2 Yoga as a Spiritual Practice in Social Work

This chapter examines whether there can be a place in social work for yoga. I situate this discussion within the debate on the place of spirituality in social work and the emergence of a post-modern, inclusive, non-sectarian, plural spirituality that embraces useful practices from various traditions like yoga. Transpersonal theory within social work provides a useful framework for understanding the potential of yoga to contribute to social work aims such as overcoming the oppression and marginality of addiction. Ken Wilber's four quadrant theory of reality is applied to highlight the place of the internal intentional domain and its connection to the other three quadrants. His theory helps to integrate transpersonal knowledge with other layers of social work knowledge obtained from research focusing on other quadrants of reality such as external behaviour or socio-economic conditions. The challenge is to find whether achieving yoga tasks is transferred into other life domains thus challenging learned helplessness that is a feature of addiction. Using a post-modern, critical theoretical perspective I propose a progressive use of yoga over being satisfied with more conventional aims that fails to challenge the marginalisation and oppression of addiction. In this context yoga is an empowerment tool that may create a viable alternative lifestyle of choice for the participant based upon a difference model of transformation.

Yoga has rarely been applied by social workers in specific social work programs although meditation has been applied in addiction recovery¹³. Only one social worker has published an evaluation study on the use of yoga with sex offenders (Derezotes 2000). An Indian social worker has written an article on the application of yoga to social work practice (Fernandes 1998). As a social worker and yoga teacher, I want to create a place for yoga in social work rather than understand them as separate and distinct activities in my life. But is finding a practice like yoga beneficial, even life changing, sufficient justification for incorporating it into a profession like social work?

¹³ See Chapter Six on Yoga Programs in Corrections and Addiction Recovery for descriptions of the main programs using yoga in addiction recovery.

Alternatively, is this identification something I need to simply “get over” and move onto implementation issues? These are some of the questions I grapple with in this chapter.

I argue, from a transpersonal social work perspective, that yoga teaching can be included within social work as an individual, group work, and community work practice. By “transpersonal”, I am referring to our capacity as human beings to operate from a connection to our spiritual capacity such as our capacity to express love and compassion for ourselves and others (Robbins, Chatterjee and Canda 1998). I explore relevant literature on spirituality in social work practice and some of the issues involved in making use of yoga as a spiritual practice in this field.

Before commencing, it is important that I define key terms like spirituality as distinct from religion, and why yoga is a spiritual practice and not a religion.

Definitions of Spirituality, Religion and Yoga as a Spiritual Practice

Spirituality and Religion Defined

Canda and Furman (1999) in *Spiritual Diversity in Social Work Practice* define spirituality as “relating to a universal and fundamental aspect of what it means to be human-to search for a sense of meaning, purpose, and moral frameworks for relating with self, others and ultimate reality” (Canda and Furman 1998 p. 37). Religion is an “institutionalized pattern of beliefs, behaviors and experiences orientated towards spiritual concerns and shared by a community and transmitted over time in traditions” (Canda and Furman 1999 p. 37). Tacey states that, while previously religion incorporated spirituality, which tended to be confined to the dedicated few and the clergy, with the mass population satisfied with the external formalities, today, spirituality has broken free and expanded to include atheism (Tacey 2003). Religion is now the interest of a diminishing minority, reflecting the gradual demise in the West of formal adherence, by way of regular Sunday mass

attendance, to the Christian Church¹⁴. The two terms clearly overlap in referring to belief systems, rituals and shared practices. They seem to split apart with spirituality referring to an individuals search for fulfillment while religion refers to some sense of formalized practice, implying a corporate or group expression of spirituality. A hint of the difference also comes from the Latin origin of the word religion, “religio”, which means to link back or to bind over. Most of the definitions in the social work literature refer to religion as requiring an organized structure of belief system while spirituality, although it may also have organized beliefs and history, does not require these elements.

In defining spirituality, Canda and Furman present a social work operational model of spirituality which analytically describes the range of elements that comprise the expression of spirituality (Canda and Furman 1999). The elements in their operational model of spirituality as wholeness covers spiritual “drives, experiences, functions, development, and expression”. (Canda and Furman 1999 p. 49). Spiritual practices are located as a subset of experiences and hence play only a small part in their model probably because most social work theorists on spirituality seem uncomfortable promoting social work practitioners actually teaching a spiritual practice (Ellor, Netting, and Thibault 2002). This is surprising to me because spiritual practices may be one vehicle through which people achieve some form of transformation (Foster 1989).

Spiritual Practices Defined

Spiritual practices are disciplines that have evolved over centuries from the origins of religions and spiritualities. In Christianity, for example, traditional practices include inward disciplines such as prayer, (including meditation as a form of contemplative prayer), fasting and scriptural study, and outward disciplines like charitable service and communal practices such as worship, confession and feasts of celebration. The Christian view is that these

¹⁴ The recent growth of evangelical churches may reflect the growth of fundamentalism in the post modern world. It contradicts the trend referred to here.

practices place the person in preparation for the work of the spirit or grace, which does the actual transformation (Foster 1989).

Yoga as a Spiritual Practice

Yoga is a spirituality most identified with India although it is widely practiced and flourishing outside its origin homeland. The spiritual practices associated with yoga are the core non-sectarian disciplines of eight-fold path set out by Patanjali who first systematized yoga (Feuerstein 1997). These are described in detail in chapter five of this thesis. The teaching elements of the path are:

1. *asanas* or bodily postures,
2. *pranayamas* or breathing exercises,
3. *pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses exercises which are usually described as relaxation in the west, and
4. the combined concentration and meditation exercises aimed at stilling the constant movement of the distracted mind and allowing the person to experience stillness, silence and inner peace.

The non-teaching elements are the ethical principles called *yamas* and the observances called *niyamas*. The ethical principles and observances are fundamental to a yoga lifestyle and, while they may not be formally taught, adherence is achieved more by way of the pedagogical relationship developed between the student and the teacher and via participation in a yoga practitioner community or *sangha*, which generally involves participation in some kind of self-study and self-reflective exercises.

This current role of yoga in the addiction field is one of being a complementary therapy to other core social work and health interventions which are provided such as detoxification and withdrawal support, casework and counselling, residential treatment and therapy and self-help group support. Other alternative complementary therapies are usually provided to allow participants to choose from a range of complementary modalities. As a complementary therapy, yoga does not replace the need for counselling and other forms of support provided by human services agencies and the

community. In correctional services, yoga can be provided as an educational or recreational service and fulfils a therapeutic and recreational function.

Georg Feuerstein, a leading U.S. academic writer on yoga, defines yoga as a spirituality, even though some schools of yoga may act very much like religions (Feuerstein 1996). As these definitions imply, it remains difficult to completely separate spirituality from religion. The argument that yoga is a spiritual practice or discipline reflects its history as emerging from the practices of cave or forest practitioners and wandering teachers who were not connected formally to religious or educational establishments but often shared a dialogue with priests and other formal religious and educational bodies¹⁵. In the Vedic period of its history, emergent yoga practices were developed as a reaction to the materialistic religions based upon animal sacrifice, which were aimed to achieve beneficial outcomes for the devotee or practitioner (Bryant 2001). Even today, one generation of yoga teachers stands between most senior current practitioners and their teachers who were often living a marginal existence away from society but influencing that society through their teaching.

As yoga has become a more popular practice, it has inevitably taken on some of the characteristics of an organized entity. Nearly all yoga styles or schools maintain that yoga is a spiritual discipline or practice that can be used beneficially by a person of any religious beliefs or none. While some people fear that yoga may draw them away from their religious beliefs, a non-sectarian approach to yoga will tend to strengthen and add to a person's existing spiritual tradition rather than lead them away from it. Nevertheless, a perception remains that yoga may lead people to give up their religious beliefs for eastern religions and the application of yoga practices for social ends in human service systems continues to be adversely affected by these expressed concerns.

¹⁵ It is incorrect to label yoga a Hindu practice. Yoga practices arose from within other eastern religions such as Buddhism. Certainly yoga is an eastern spiritual practice.

The Place for Spirituality in Social Work

For most of the 20th century, the social work profession presented a thoroughly secular perspective to the world and borrowed from other secular theoretical perspectives such as psychoanalysis and Marxism (Canda, Smith 2001; Cowley 1993; Lindsay 2002; Rice 2002). Many social workers have struggled to find a place for their emerging interest in spirituality within social work. There are expressed concerns in the literature about the application of spirituality in social work (Canda and Furman 1999; Ellor, Netting and Thibault 2002; Lindsay 2002). Social work is exploring a place for spirituality with the emergence of a post-modern, non-sectarian spiritual perspective (Canda, Furman 1999, Lindsay 2002). Social work, as a distinct professional group, emerged by incorporating, adapting and developing theory and practice knowledge, ethics and values from other established professions such as medicine, law, business administration, and the field of religion. The spiritual dimension was recognized by the profession as a vital arena of intervention and its place is named in the earliest social work texts, such as in Mary Richmond's book published in 1922. (Richmond 1922).

Transpersonal social work has recognized this link to the origins of social work. My professional interest in incorporating yoga in social work is building upon these origins and consistent with the eclectic history of the profession where it works across professional boundaries and introduces an external practice and applies it to social work objectives (Lindsay, Turcotte and Hopmeyer, 2003).

Wilber uses the concept of "holon" as a way to understand any entity or phenomena that is neither a whole, nor a part of something, but both simultaneously (Walsh 1998). Wilber's holon concept helps justify and explain how social work developed by drawing upon the theories, disciplines and practices outside the profession. It makes it seem perfectly normal that social work evolution would require this interaction. This concept is consistent with dialectical analysis, systems theory and a Buddhist concept of inter-being,

that no phenomena can have a separate existence. One Buddhist claims that for a self to exist, it must consist of 'non-self' elements (Hanh 1996, p. 38).

Transpersonal Social Work

I situate my study within a transpersonal perspective on social work and the work of theorist Ken Wilber (Canda & Smith 2001). Wilber proposes a model, which describes four quadrants of reality, and his theory gives recognition to the internal, interior domain where subjectivity and consciousness operate. (See Figure 2 below) He postulates that work done in this domain has impact on the other domains while also recognizing the necessity and legitimacy of other intervention strategies that address problems in living in the other domains. What attracts me to Wilber's model is the value and emphasis he places on all quadrants being addressed in intervention strategies. In other words, the real test for transpersonal theory and spiritual levels of consciousness is the capacity to be helpful towards improved performance in the other quadrants. By using this theoretical perspective, I hope this thesis can contribute to the recognition in the social work profession of the useful role that a non-sectarian, spiritual practice like yoga may play in improving health outcomes and complementing other social interventions in addiction recovery.

Figure 2

Wilber's Four Quadrants Model of Reality

Interior Intentional Domain Validity Criteria- Sincerity	Exterior Behavioural Domain Validity Criteria- Empirical Observations of Individual Actions
Cultural Domain Validity Criteria-Intersubjective Meaning (Is it culturally appropriate, just, mutually understood)	Social/Economic/Political System Domain Validity Criteria-Empirical Observations of Collective, system wide data

Implications of Transpersonal Theory for Social Work

Is spirituality a higher or separate parallel consciousness or part of the unconscious mind? Does it help develop more mature human beings who can leave addictive and/or offending lifestyles behind? Wilber makes use of the concept of hierarchy and claims a substantial body of evidence that demonstrates there are levels of maturity or human development (Loevinger 1970, Hauser 1990). He claims that transpersonal theory argues there are higher levels of consciousness beyond the rational mind that are recognized in spiritual traditions but largely ignored, until recently, by Western thought. Whether spirit is part of or higher or lower than the conscious mind, the evidence seems to suggest the links between spiritual and psychological growth are complex and varied (Cortright 1997, p. 64-81). The claim humans are a spirit as well as “mind inhabiting a body” is central to transpersonal theory, even if Wilber’s concept of hierarchy is not accepted. My personal view is that the spirit is available to us at every level of consciousness. It also seems to flower as we mature, which appears consistent with Ken Wilber’s integral model where higher levels of consciousness are proposed. Scott Peck also argues that spiritual growth is an extension of maturity (Peck 1998, p. 9). Most spiritual traditions claim that developing our spiritual capacity helps us in repairing obstacles to our human development (Fauteux 1994). At the same time, it is also possible to be very advanced spiritually and have neuroses that reflect immature levels of consciousness. Equally, certain people can be highly mature and not spiritual at all (Cortright 1997). ‘Spiritual bypassing’ may occur which involves using spiritual ideas or practices to avoid dealing with social or emotional unfinished business or deficiencies in developmental growth and that this is a common problem in some Western peoples’ uncritical adoption of Eastern spiritualities (Welword 2000 p. 5).

For many people, spirituality seems to grow out of higher levels of psychological maturity, but can it contribute to growth at a range of maturity levels? It has been claimed that spiritual practices, alongside with other interventions such as counselling, can speed up or assist the development of

more mature ego defense mechanisms such as altruism, sublimation and suppression (Valliant 1977). But to achieve this result requires considerable time, attention and patience for the helper “to share the responsibilities for the consequences” and offer an “alternative mode of coping” (Valliant 1977 p. 90). It is very common for people to report becoming more compassionate, creative, integrated and able to resist drives and urges that would have overwhelmed them in the past, through a committed spiritual practice.

It is unclear whether this finding supports Wilber’s higher consciousness model. However, this uncertainty should not prevent the further application of spiritual practices like yoga and meditation, along with other more conventional social work practices, being used to advance more mature defense mechanisms in people who offend or are addicted, particularly those who are interested in these practices, providing Valliant’s qualifications are adhered to by the program¹⁶.

Why are maturity levels important? From my experience in the corrections and addiction recovery fields, levels of maturity and people’s characteristic responses in dealing with their life’s issues are significant factors in assessment and case management (Wedge, White, & Palmer 1980). Addiction tends to delay development or growth in maturity and lower maturity levels make people more likely to remain caught up in offending and addiction. Any strategy that can aid in increasing maturity levels and create more diverse and health producing responses to stress may be beneficial in reducing the risk of recidivism or relapse. According to Valliant and other life history researchers in this area, it is our reaction to problems and opportunities that determines our passage through life-not the absence of problems (Laub, Sampson 1995, 2003). In addiction recovery, yoga is being applied to help increase maturity levels, not to diminish ego strength.

If yoga and meditation can assist in the adoption of more mature ego mechanisms of defense and improve relationship-building skills then they may

¹⁶ I am referring to Valliant’s view that a helping agent must be prepared to work in the long-term if working to create higher levels of ego maturity in a client.

have a very important place in recovery from offending and addiction for those who choose to use these methods. Palmer has noted the most well resourced, thoroughly researched rehabilitation programs for offenders that target skill capacity deficits and relieve external environmental pressures on offenders, but fail to address the “internal difficulties” of offenders, have failed to deliver on promised recidivism reductions (Palmer 1992 p. 108-130).

Wilber proposes a four quadrants model to map all domains of reality, including interior domains that allow for subjectivity, consciousness and thinking and feeling processes. According to Wilber, previous theoretical positions such as systems theories, theories focused on external behaviour, are adequate as far as they go, providing they maintain their focus on their particular domain of knowledge. He claims they commit categorical errors when they try to explain everything with reference to their limited focus, which leads to reductionism. Wilber is saying that knowledge and practice gained from developing the spiritual person may positively enlighten the social, cultural and behavioral domains, but it does not take away from the value of specific knowledge gained in these areas. Wilber is equally interested in the expression of spirit in these domains of everyday reality so that our world can also be transformed alongside our minds.

The advantage for social work in Wilber’s model is that it recognizes the positive value of the layers of social work knowledge in its history and provides a place for valid transpersonal knowledge and the knowledge gained in other quadrants. It requires that insight from transpersonal practices like yoga complement valid knowledge from practice focusing on other domains such a counselling and social support services. Applying Wilber’s theoretical perspective to social work, I would perceive social work as built upon layers of valid but partial knowledge. (See figure 3 below) As an “emergent” holon, social work grew out of influences that created its origins as a separate profession. For most of its history, social work has operated as a “flat-land” profession, to use a expression from Wilber, ignoring the spiritual dimension and even the inner workings of consciousness, because of its focus on the external “empirical” world, which can be observed and measured (Wilber 1998

p. 10). While a thread of spirituality has existed throughout its history, the value of the four quadrants model of reality for spirituality in social work is that it recognizes all domains and gives due recognition to the sound findings of research and practice wisdom in specific areas, with the qualification that this knowledge is always partial.

Figure 3

Transpersonal Social Work “History Map”
Wilber’s Four Quadrant Domains applied to Social Work Knowledge

Interior Intentional Domain	Exterior Behavioural Domain
Investigation of individual subjectivity	Investigation of external individual behaviour
Validity criteria-Is It sincere, meaningful empowering?	Validity Criteria-Empirical measurement of behaviour-did it happen? Our individual actions are our only responsibility
Social Work layers include- Christianity, psychoanalytic, phenomenological, existential and transpersonal Methodologies used include yoga, meditation, diary keeping and individual counselling	Social work layers include most psychology with a behavioural focus. In corrections and addiction fields, emphasis is on strategies to stop offending and harmful behaviours. In yoga, the principles of <i>yama</i> and <i>niyama</i> apply here.
Cultural Domain	Social Domain
Investigation of group subjectivities	Investigation of socio-economical external factors, including social normative, from a transpersonal perspective-does this social economic arrangement contribute favourably to world peace, social development and harmony?
Validity Criteria- It is appropriate, just, mutually understood, building connections and relationships	Validity Criteria-External costs and benefits Who wins power, influence and affluence, and loses, becomes excluded and how.
Social work layers include-dialogical, experiential, social group work, self-help, critical subjectivity, and ecological approaches. Strategies such as restorative justice conferencing, which heals then impact of crime on relationships, operate primarily in this domain. Other strategies include family and group counselling, narrative therapy. In yoga and engaged buddhism, the	Social work layers in social and economic investigations, policy and program development, systems theory, functional schools, and critical theory. In Yoga and engaged Buddhism the practice of karma yoga (selfless actions), social activism, right livelihood apply (<i>karma</i> yoga is the social work of yoga as engaged buddhism is the social work of

<i>sangha</i> or community of practitioners is important in this domain	buddhism).
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Figure 4 shows some of the layers of social casework that have contributed to current social work practice. A transpersonal social work perspective may be perceived as the next phase in the emergence of the social work profession, one that allows for the expression and application of spiritual practices (Canda & Smith 2001). Canda and Smith argue that transpersonal theory “offers the profession a whole new realm of possible helping strategies and practices and a myriad of methodologies for accessing the spiritual dimension without the imposition of a particular set of beliefs” (Canda & Smith 2001, p. 3).

Figure 4
Some Layers of Social Work History

Phase of Social Work	Enduring Benefits
Pre Social Work-Volunteer	Authentic helping traditions and practice wisdom-The mythic legends and factual life of saints and heroic charitable workers
Legal and Medical Models (Mary Richmond)	The need for careful assessment and intervention
(Freud, Jung and the unconscious)	Psychological understanding of the unconscious mind and its impact on consciousness
Functional-systems	Task centred, social work as agent of service
Radical Marxist Social Work	Critique of social control function of social work and need for an emancipatory agenda
Critical Post modern	No essential social work, focus on empowerment through discourse
Transpersonal	Includes higher consciousness capacity in humans

The Growth of Post-Modern Non-Sectarian Spirituality

Rae Lindsay in *Recognizing Spirituality*, explores the interface between spirituality and social work, primarily in clinical practice, in an Australian context. Her argument is that social work in Australia has not kept pace with societal changes in attitude in some sections of society towards spirituality (Lindsay 2002 p. 144). Firstly, she makes the point that, in the training of current social workers, religion has no place. "Social work was a secular profession within a secular society" (Lindsay 2002, p. 4). Lindsay notes that social commentators have identified the resurgence of interest in spirituality in Australia as many people "go into retreat" (Lindsay 2002 p. 7).

Despite this new interest, the fear of the "spiritual" still exists in human services as evidenced in the focus group discussions with yoga teachers and others that form a part of this research project¹⁷. I think the social work concern with spiritual matters encroaching upon professional focus reflects a more widely held community view, but Lindsay's point that certain elements of Australian society are seriously exploring spirituality appears valid. At the same time, there is a recognition amongst radical writers that spirit has been ignored in radical emancipatory theory and practice in favour of structural and materialist analysis that created a spiritual vacuum on the left and discouraged progressive approaches to spirituality (Koval 1985). The vacuum allowed space for the conservative right, particularly in America, but increasingly in Australia, to promote religious fundamentalism in current reform proposals. Similar groups have colluded with the agendas of conservative governments who favour the winding back of universal social service provision in preference to private and/or religious based human service provision and paternalistic welfare provision. This scenario has made some progressives more suspicious of any spiritual involvement in human services. Historically, professional social work values were forged in opposition to fundamentalist religious and materialistic competitive values held in society like the individualistic value of the survival of the fittest and

¹⁷ This matter was discussed by the health professionals in focus group 1.

certain authoritarian Catholic beliefs that contradict social work values such as fixed moral principles, contempt for the carnal physical nature of humanity and our inherent sinfulness (Bisno 1952). Later in this chapter, I discuss what a critical social work perspective, which includes a spiritual dimension, can add to a progressive yoga in social work practice agenda.

As I stated in the introduction to this chapter, there is a recognition that the use of “inclusive, non-sectarian conceptualizations of spirituality” has “increased the relevance and applicability of spirituality to social work practice” (Rice 2002 p. 304). Greater recognition is being given to the healing power of faith and belief and the placebo effect in medicine and in the protective benefit that spirituality can play in prevention of illness and positive health. Spirituality can open people to deeper, broader dimensions of their lives and many modern social problems don’t seem to be able to be resolved without recourse to higher or transpersonal levels of consciousness that result from transformative practices such as meditation or yoga (Cowley 1993). Spirituality can be a tremendous strength to draw upon through one’s life. Social work espouses a position that focuses upon the strengths of the participant given their potential to produce greater benefits (Cascio 1998).

There is also a view that too often progressive practitioners with a spiritual perspective towards practice ignore the structural inequities and injustices that contribute to individual pathologies like addiction. However, Morell has argued that the “interconnectedness” or inter-being concept applied in many spiritual perspectives can be a connecting concept for individual and group spiritual practices and political tactics that aim to tackle the contributing social factors such as inadequate services, low income, poor work opportunities, limited housing and gender issues (Morell 1996).

Lindsay comments on the multi-cultural nature of Australian society and the central role that belief systems play in determining behavior. Many clients “do not share the values of the typically educated western social worker” (Lindsay 2002, p. 19). Other factors that Lindsay claims have challenged the values and practices of the profession include the indigenous peoples’ challenge and

the questioning of the Judeo-Christian assumptions underlying the individualistic nature of direct social work methods. These changes have meant that “social work is now paying far more attention to how people construct their world and so humanistic phenomenological theories have new appeal” (Lindsay 2002, p. 19).

Progressive writers on spirituality and social work are calling for a non-sectarian, plural, post-modern spirituality, that takes account of diverse spiritualities. David Tacey defines post-modern spirituality as “one that meets the demands of the present in ways that are entirely in accordance with our advanced technical, scientific and intellectual development” (Tacey 1995 p. 5). Wilber, in his attempt to marry science and spirituality, argues that the mythological claims of religion need to be discarded as “dogma and bogus”, (Wilber 1998 p. 165) without denying that mythological elements provide a rich source of meaning and identity for many people, regardless of their validity in history. What Wilber calls “authentic spirituality” must be based on “falsifiable evidence” (Wilber 1998 p. 166). By this he means that it must be based upon spiritual experience that can satisfy empirical standards of evidence “with the eye of contemplation” (Wilber 1998 p. 170). I discuss his concept of transpersonal evidence in Chapter three on research methodology.

Tacey, in his critique of new age spirituality, speaks of authentic spirituality as creating a state of mind of “negative capability” meaning being comfortable with the inevitable “doubts, fears and uncertainties”. New age spirituality “leaves out the hard bits” such as “sacrifice, discipline, commitment and dedication to the other”, whereas authentic spirituality “is not something that make itself available to our egotistical designs, but rather draws us into the larger world and makes us subordinate to a greater will that transcends us on all sides” (Tacey 2003 p.12, 146).

Lindsay provides some guidelines to contemporary perspectives on spirituality. Not limited to elites, spirituality has expanded beyond specific methods to include ones “deepest values, ...experiences, and orientation” (Lindsay 2002 p. 26). No longer “exclusively concerned with... attaining

perfection” spirituality “touches every area of human experience” (Lindsay 2002 p. 27). Lindsay points to the greater degree of experimentation in our contemporary society with diverse spiritual practices.

In respect to practice implications, Lindsay suggests the spiritually sensitive social work practitioners will listen to participant questions that are evoking spirituality and help them explore them further, create an atmosphere conducive to a discussion of spirituality, perhaps using a genogram to trace spiritual roots, help “paint the person’s spiritual quest over time”, and, without assuming actual practices such as meditation may be useful, adopt them, when appropriate (Lindsay 2002 p. 144-149). She notes that the literature on spirituality emphasizes the importance of the worker “coming to terms with their own spirituality before entering the realm of another” (Lindsay 2002 p. 149).

This section has explored some of the writings of key social work and Australian texts on spirituality. While there is renewed interest in spirituality and a decline in certain religious faiths, there remains some anxiety and opposition to including spirituality in professional practice. The style of postmodern spirituality is inclusive, non-sectarian, strength focused, and critically reinterpetive of the mythical origins of religion and other spiritual paths like yoga. Authentic postmodern spirituality is contrasted to infantile new age practices that “leave out the hard bits” (Tacey 2003, p. 141) like discipline and daily struggle and the requirement to face one’s everyday responsibilities in all quadrants of reality.

Progressive Social Work Practice: Implications for Yoga

Challenging Materialist Approaches

Marginalized addicts comprise a significant portion in the target population for addiction recovery and correctional services¹⁸. By marginalized I am referring

¹⁸ 85% of all prisoners have not completed secondary schooling. The Victorian Prison System Office of Correctional Services Commissioner *Statistical Profile 1995-96 to 1998-99*.

to individuals who have few existing social supports, tenuous connections to legitimate avenues of human aspiration such as employment, and have experienced serious negative sanctions from society as a result of their addiction or offending. Most of the participants are male and have failed in community-based diversionary strategies.

I contend that a transpersonal social work perspective supports the primacy of the spiritual but gives due importance to practical measures in other quadrants and strengthens the requirement for yoga to adapt to the social and economic requirements of the marginalized person.

But how does yoga address poverty? Are not all the problems of addicts essentially because they are marginalized and oppressed? Don't they need decent housing and employment? How do practices like physical exercises, ancient philosophy, and meditation address these real needs? I propose to address these concerns by exploring how the recent critical theoretical approaches provide some directions in how yoga can complement other social work interventions. Our personal environment is more than our possessions and includes our relationships to others and our environment, which includes meaningful work and pastimes. Neglecting these areas does affect the maintenance of addictive behaviours (Barber 1995).

Progressive social work theory helps to resolve this alleged dilemma concerning whether material circumstances or inner consciousness raising issues are predominant. Oppressive states of mind and social circumstances arising from the impacts of addiction takes place from within and without the person. Conscientization or "the process in which men, not as recipients but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of their socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality" (Friere 1972 p. 15) can be assisted through educational strategies like yoga. To achieve this objective, the yoga may be adapted to the marginal addicted client. The yoga teacher aims to engage the students and diminish the differences between the students and the teacher by minimizing yoga "jargon" like using Sanskrit names for poses, using Indian chants to

commence the class, and the playing of nonwestern music. The teacher uses appropriate self-disclosure and makes time for ordinary dialogue to happen to create meaningful relationships with clients¹⁹.

Firstly, yoga is a lifestyle choice for the teacher and the student. Yoga philosophy aims for people to begin their practice in the immediate circumstances of their lives, because if you wait for it to be better, the yoga practice won't happen. Yoga teachers learn from using their own bodies as a laboratory and from their students input into the teaching process. The lived experience of the yoga teacher and their students is integrated into the yoga teaching and practice. As well as helping to challenge a nihilistic despairing response to addiction and marginalisation, yoga can be used to "keep the door ajar" by opening a window of opportunity to a non-addictive lifestyle (Denborough 1996 p.155). This lifestyle can combine some conventional aspirations to which most marginalized people aspire, like earning a reasonable income from employment and having mutually satisfying relationships, with a critical challenge to the materialistic culture that helps generate conventional addictive behaviours and aspirations for unrealistic, unsustainable lifestyles (Eckersley 2005).

James Barber's approach to developing progressive casework can assist in framing a social work approach to yoga. He describes learned helplessness as a feature of marginalisation and oppression found in poverty and addiction. Briefly there is a lack of motivation to act because the person has learned that their responses don't work or have the required impact in their lives. He describes how the social worker must create controllable events where the person is "dragged or coaxed" into action (Barber 1991 p.39). This action must be repeated over and over again until a sense of mastery in this area is achieved, where their efforts are rewarded with immediate success. It is only after this learned helplessness is overcome that the person can move to the stage of participatory competency where involvement in community building

¹⁹ It could be argued that the attraction for some western people of bhakti yoga schools (i.e. Yoga of devotion) such as the Hare Krishna movement is precisely their unique acceptance of hindu cultural traditions. My comments here are directed at hatha yoga teachers-teaching asana and meditation.

takes place. In my view Yoga is a practical methodology that can be used in social work to create this sense of mastery.

Challenging Yoga

The social work yoga practitioner can view the competing yoga schools as language battlefields. Critical social theory would claim there is no essential social work or yoga truth but multiple, locally-situated practices. The practitioner makes them meaningful by exploring various approaches and finding practices that work and adopting them as their own, whilst recognizing that they are always partial solutions that can be discarded when better options come along. Critical social theory destabilizes the established discourses that surround the addict, social worker and yoga teacher. Rather than having a fixed identity, the emphasis is placed upon subjectivities that include notions of conscious and unconscious sense of self, thoughts and emotions, and ways of understanding others and the world outside you. While these subjectivities are produced without powerful discourses, there are opportunities for the person to create their own subjectivities in the post-modern world of reality. For example, the yoga teacher and student are free to connect to the ancient understandings of yoga that resonate with their practice while building upon a developing practice that blends from a range of practices taught from a number of schools of yoga. Equally, another teacher may be comfortable staying completely within one tradition and style of yoga. The same applies to the addict in recovery. S/he may have access to a range of therapies within available resources. S/he may choose some support from a twelve-step program but incorporate complementary therapies and an alternate lifestyle approach to living, that places less stress upon her recovery than a full time occupation. A critical social work approach espouses difference over progress as the model of transformation.

In this thesis I show how yoga teachers working in addiction recovery have adopted a range of techniques to engage students that would not normally be considered 'yoga', but in fact reflect social work processes such as engagement of the client. I claim there is no essence of yoga or social work

and that the local historical contexts is more important in encouraging appropriate diversity in practice. There is one senior world yoga teacher who has stated as much in encouraging students to learn from competent teachers “within their own culture” who realize “there are no standard solutions, no standard problems and a host of individual circumstances that affect any outcome. These include the students “trust and discipline, family support, school or working conditions, to name a few” (Desikachar 1988 p. 144). Hence, the yoga program needs to be adapted to the material circumstances of the students.

This approach does not mean that all the ancient writings, traditions and practices handed down through yogis should be discarded. Quite the contrary, it is up to the individual to find out those aspects of these traditions that are still alive to them and to others. Further, in the ‘language battlefield’ of the competing yoga schools one does find a surprisingly consistent common core of values, experiences and practices. There is also a common core of physical postures and, while the yoga schools may teach various approaches to these same postures, there is a significant amount of commonality in practice. Central to all schools of yoga is the experience of the true seer or enlightened or pure mind that can observe the distractions and cravings of the ordinary consciousness or the ‘monkey mind’ and its impact on the body. Just as narrative therapy in social work externalizes conversations so that people can disengage from discourses that are disempowering, yoga provides an experience of inner power over the distracted mind patterns that are governing one’s actions in craving, aversion or addiction. Another way of describing the effect of yoga is that it integrates the body-mind continuum and enables the practitioner to experience an intense stilling of movement or mindfulness that produces a more profound awareness of the patterns of thinking.

Perhaps there is also a valid argument that the yoga *sutras* of *Patanjali* provide a core belief system. It finally gets back to a long apprenticeship of trial and error, regular practice and maintaining the stand of remaining a perpetual student of yoga. In teaching, the focus is on the learning needs of

the student. The material needs are bound up in the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the student and yoga as a complementary therapy in social work aims to address some of these needs. The transpersonal approach recognizes the value of a spiritual practice in bringing an individual to their fullest potential. It acknowledges the value of other complementary interventions in tackling social justice issues and personal problems.

Michael Learner speaks of the marginalized and the poor experiencing a condition he calls surplus powerlessness, which refers to the psychological burden that many people carry around with them inside their heads in addition to the structural conditions of oppression (Learner 1998). I am asserting that it is precisely in these circumstances where yoga can assist to develop freedom from surplus powerlessness. Yoga can be used to achieve conventional goals such as for the human maintenance of the body. Mullaly claims that one's paradigm determines the aims and objectives of the practices used by a profession (Mullaly 1993). A conventional use of yoga would aim to assist the residents of an addiction recovery service or correctional facility to conform to the residential facility and then to society upon release and give them some skills to help them cope better with the pressures of modern living. Frequently, yoga's benefits such as relaxation, increased will power, injury relief, improved flexibility, release from compulsive reactive thinking are claimed to be the primary aims. These are legitimate aims but they miss the real potential of yoga to be life changing and they fail to "elegantly challenge" (Thompson 1998 p. 200) the conditions in our society that are contributing to marginalisation and addiction. A progressive use of yoga is aiming to create a "contradictory consciousness" (Leonard 1997 p. 48) that can help participants resist pressures from society, peer group pressure, and from their own minds to zone out via addiction. Practicing yoga can help the student develop alternative lifestyle choices.

Yoga aims to create agency, self-actualization or infinite possibility in the participant (May 1977). It is an empowerment strategy, asserting that empowerment is nurtured and developed from within the self as well as through outside agency via relationships and resources. There is a tendency

in social work empowerment models to focus exclusively on empowerment from without and little recognition is given to the power of a liberated consciousness. In Yoga there is an equally reverse tendency to claim that empowerment is exclusively “within the mind”. Thompson claims that empowerment must occur at an ontological level before tackling the socio-political level (Thompson 1998). Barber concurs that the learned helplessness that is a legacy of addiction requires our attention first before the person can participate successfully in political strategies.

From an anti-oppressive and “engaged” Buddhist approach to this issue, social liberation must involve mind liberation. All quadrants need to be addressed, the transpersonal, behavioural, cultural and the structural. In using yoga there are limitations and opportunities in applying this paradigm in social work. For example, a limitation is that yoga is only going to interest some participants at a level where transformation can occur. At a structural level, engaged Buddhism talks about creating a “radical culture of awakening” (Jones 2003) where there is freedom from the sense of powerlessness experienced daily under the weight of addiction and the service delivery system the participant is caught up in (Jones 2003). A structural limitation is that yoga in social work operates within the existing service system to produce change and struggles to provide effective programming with the resources that are available or created by the program.

From my own experience, the opportunities from yoga include participation in a community of practitioners who are engaged in the creation of an addiction free lifestyle and a better world. Yoga can create a space for a new identity to emerge away from the offending and addiction based lifestyles. Through the adoption of these practices, new friendships and relationships may develop and existing positive relationships of importance should be enhanced through the development of mindfulness and compassion for others.²⁰ Stress levels may be reduced and overall health improved with the experience of yoga discipline being adapted gradually to other aspects of their lives. A sense of

²⁰ Negative relationships may fall away over time.

achievement can be anticipated and a gradual falling away of compulsive patterns and the constant need for external stimulation and pleasure seeking is reduced. Yoga helps to provide a sense of achieving normal adult mastery of duty and commitment to task achievement that addiction takes away from us. It can free us from societal sanctioned compulsions like consumerism and the mass consumption driven agendas by encouraging a contentment with the basic necessities of life, and adopting a more frugal life-enhancing lifestyle.

Such potential is exactly the opposite to the fatalism, violence, and self-depreciation that the internalization of oppression and addiction result in. The progressive social worker as yoga teacher will tackle these issues on an individual, group and community level. For a yoga program to be effective in this area, it must operate at all these levels providing individual support and training, group classes and a community of support and advocacy within and without the service systems in which it operates.

Personal Reflection

In addition to the above benefits, using Wilber's model, I can look at how yoga has affected me in each quadrant of my life. In the upper left quadrant, the practice has affected my identity and given me access to insight along with considerable daily serenity and peace. In the upper right quadrant governing external individual behaviour, yoga has motivated me, helped in making more discriminating choices, provided a firmer ethical basis to my decision making and helped me to gradually become more organized and dedicated to task achievement. The lower left quadrant that concerns itself with the cultural domain, the yoga journey has allowed me to discover and strengthen my connection to the mystical Carmelite tradition in Christianity and reinvigorated my interest in the role of myth, narrative and story-telling as a fundamental tool of my social work practice. Finally, in the lower right quadrant that concerns itself with the external group world of work and social-economic life, I think my yoga practice has altered my priorities and made me more content with my existence by allowing me to focus more on my inputs into processes rather than paying attention to outcomes and unrealistic futures.

Summary

In this chapter I have tried to map a vision of yoga's potential in social work to help in the addiction recovery and corrections fields through a progressive transpersonal approach that aims to combine yoga with other interventions that address all quadrants of reality. The envisaged yoga program would need to have an individual, group, and community focus to achieve these objectives. A progressive transpersonal yoga in social work demands of the practitioner a strong commitment to providing a safe, reliable holding environment to enable higher maturity levels in the student to develop from a dedicated practice. A post-modern spiritual perspective respects difference and diversity in approach by participants. Yoga in social work aims to provide agency and resources to tackle learned helplessness or surplus powerlessness in the addict and helps to achieve their legitimate aspirations but also encourage the questioning of the materialistic priorities of conventional society.

Chapter 3 Methodology

In this chapter I identify the central research questions of this thesis. I explain the research methods used in this thesis and link these methods to the established research methodology literature. Next I explain in detail how data was gathered using the research methods of focus groups, interviews, research literature and my own practice experience. Finally I identify the limitations of the research methodology and the implementation of the research.

The Central Research Questions

Having clarified my vision for how yoga in social work might assist people with addiction problems, I can describe the central questions that the research is focusing upon. They are firstly :

What are the views of yoga teachers and other health professionals working in the addiction recovery field about how yoga can assist addicts to overcome addiction?

To address this question I have conducted focus groups, one to one interviews with yoga teachers, and examined the literature on yoga and transformation, yoga and addiction recovery and the literature on yoga programs in this area.

And secondly,

What is my experience in using yoga to deal with my cravings?

The thesis was never envisaged as a vehicle to deal with my own cravings but that is what it became. Clark Moustakis describes heuristic research as a process of discovery, learning to accept what is rather than what we would like things to be (Moustakis 1990). I had to allow time to develop a daily practice of yoga and meditation before I could seriously teach others about the alleged benefits. I had to deal with the incongruity of my continued

cravings despite regular daily yoga and meditation practice. Something kept me going despite setbacks. Perhaps it was my teachers who emphasized the importance of a commitment to acting upon the developing wisdom that is obtained from a daily meditation practice. Many times I would fail to act and then I would have to start from scratch again. I found that maintaining friendship and support from other practitioners of yoga and meditation helped in dealing with the daily challenge of coping with cravings. Sometimes it was only this that got me over the line on that day.

Following from the first two questions, I examine yoga and direct service health practitioners experiences and practice wisdom of teaching yoga in this area and examine some exemplary yoga programs operating in this field to ask the third question:

What programmatic issues are there in attempting to operate a constructive yoga program in addiction recovery and correctional service systems?

What does it mean to teach yoga in this field and what can we learn from successful yoga programs? What are the adjustments and challenges that yoga teachers have to make? What have they learned along the way about addiction and yoga? Do they really think it works or is it just blind faith?

In relation to the “knowing through becoming” objective of the research, the question I want to answer through my own experience and reflection on the research is:

Is there a place for yoga in my social work practice?

In a sense I am exploring the idea of creating a place for yoga in social work. While this objective may only seem relevant to me, it can still have validity, as research is generally directed at areas of particular interest for the researcher. I may find that there is no place for yoga in social work. So part of the requirement for maintaining critical subjectivity is to be open to the prospect of failure and the need to think against oneself.

Overview of Research Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to document the research methodology used to find answers to these questions. I made use of multiple qualitative research methods within an action research perspective whilst using a number of methods of data collection (including two facilitated focus groups, four interviews, personal experience, and literature review). Drawing together the combined findings of these methods of research via triangulation may enable some of the conclusions to be considered as reliable and valid²¹ (Dick 2000, p. 15).

Below is Figure 5, which outlines the methodological approach adopted in this study.

Figure5
Action Research Methodologies

Focus Groups	Experiential Research
2 Focus Groups - <i>Yoga And Transformation</i> - <i>Yoga Programs in the Addiction Recovery Field (including Corrections)</i>	My own experience as yoga student and teacher/ Teaching Yoga at De Paul House Detoxification Unit and free yoga Program at St Ambroses.
Dialogic Research	Literature Review
4 One to One Interviews with Key Informants	Spirituality and Social Work Yoga, social work and addiction recovery

Research Questions and Methodology

I conducted this action research project in much the same manner that the yoga practitioners developed yoga via practice research. I examined how yoga practice has affected me in managing my own cravings. I indicated how

²¹ Dick refers to this as the *dialectic* or triangulation method in the action research paradigm.

yoga has gradually diminished my very poor dietary habits and improved my health. I cannot teach what I have not already experienced to be of value in my own life. I need therefore to conduct some reflection on how these practices are working and affecting others and myself. I have to acknowledge that, despite various wrong turns and failures along the way, I need courage and determination and even some blind faith and commitment to the process to persevere some way down the track because, of its very nature, this action research is taking some form of new action in an unknown environment. As well as applying existing yoga theory to practice, I need to adopt an inductive reflective viewpoint to allow my and other experienced practitioners “theories-in-use” to contribute to the practice theory of yoga in the addiction field (Fook 1996, p. 4). Alternatively the “espoused theory” claimed to transform addictions may need to be shaped more by the “theories in use” which are more reflective of how individual’s are effectively making use of yoga to reduce cravings and addictions.

In the dominant positivist paradigm operating in certain scientific and yoga circles, I could opt to conduct an experiment where some addicts receive yoga training in addition to other interventions and a control group receives no yoga. I could measure the impact of the yoga training against set criteria such as physical flexibility, a reported sense of inner well being, and other physical and mental criteria. A recent study of the effects of Iyengar yoga therapy for chronic lower back pain used a randomized control trial conducted on people with non-specific chronic lower back pain. After 16 weeks of a 1.5-hour class per week plus some encouragement to do a home practice every day, 20 students experienced significant reductions in pain intensity (64%), functional disability (77%) and in pain medication usage (88%) at post and three month follow up periods. However, of the 210 people who expressed an interest in the trial, only 60 were randomized and of these people, only 42 completed the study. 72.8% of the exclusions from the study were for “logistical conflicts” (Williams K et. al. 2005 p. 5). This is not explained in the study but my opinion would be that it had to do with the patients being unable to attend the yoga studio at the prescribed time. It is noted in the study that both groups

(experimental and control) represent the “relatively healthy population of subjects with chronic lower back pain” (Williams K et. al. 2005 p.1-11).

I want to know how yoga actually helps people to overcome addiction and what the programmatic requirements are to operate a successful program in these contexts. What keeps participants attending classes and completing a daily personal practice (given the necessity for prolonged commitment, before real transformation can take place)? Are there complementary actions, practices, or interventions required in addition to yoga before it can have any real affect? What is not there that needs to be there in terms of programmatic responses, and can I initiate action to help create this activity? If there are successful examples of people using yoga and meditation to overcome addictive patterns, what does their success tell us about what is required?

These are practical questions related to exploring and creating a yoga paradigm in my life as a yoga teacher and developing yoga as a potential complementary intervention in the addiction field of service. In a sense, I am required by the discipline of yoga itself, and my interest to introduce this approach into social work practice to live the experiment myself before I should work with others in a substantial way. In transpersonal research methodology this is described as knowing through becoming (Braud & Anderson 1998). It requires that I pay full attention to what is known directly by the eye of the spirit. This type of knowing seems to require a change or transformation in the investigator’s being. It requires that the investigator “become what is being studied and to know it as subject rather than as object,” including recording these reflections (Braud & Anderson 1998, p. 51-3).

Researching My Own Cravings

Moustakis describes six phases of heuristic research. It commences with the initial engagement with the action and questions arising from this action leading to immersion in the actual research, followed by an incubation period, which involves retreating from the immersion to allow for what appears to be a

stopping and ceasing process. Simone Weil describes a similar process, which requires us to wait, not grasp our topic, developing it like an apprenticeship, a “decreation” process, where we pay attention to what happens not what we anticipate or want from life (Frost and Bell-Metereau 1998 p. 105-110). Moustakis describes the next phase as illumination where what has been misunderstood, missed or distorted is focused on and discovered. Finally there is the hope of creative synthesis where the story needs to be told warts and all in writing up of the research process. The validity of heuristic research depends upon the personal truths discovered in the meaning and essence of the experience, no matter how implausible or idiosyncratic. Moustakis values participant validation, or the process of checking with other practitioners dealing with similar problems as a method of validation for personal experience (Moustakis 1990).

Bentz and Shapiro present a transpersonal perspective on research inquiry using a Buddhist synthesis of critical theory, phenomenology, and hermeneutics with the focus on the mindful inquiry by the researcher as the central focus. They point out that research is always carried out in a life world of the researcher and the co-participants. They suggest the researcher ask the question “Why are they doing this research anyway?” (Bentz & Shapiro 2000 p. 4-5). They suggest that the researcher “become aware of their personal addictive needs with regard to the inquiry” (Bentz and Shapiro 2000 p. 52). The mindful inquiry approach proposed by Bentz and Shapiro provides support for looking at the link between this research and my identity and life project to incorporate yoga and social work based upon the practice experience over the life of the research.

Four Research Methods- Interactive Holistic Research

I held two focus groups to examine the questions of how yoga transforms, and what program conditions are necessary to support transformation. Secondly, through semi-structured interviews or dialogic²² research with four key

²² Dialogic Research is dialogue between two individuals- the researcher and the interviewee.

informants, who were unable to attend the focus groups for various reasons, I was able to explore the same questions with a wider, influential target group. Thirdly, experiential research involved reflecting on my own experience of yoga in my life as a developing yoga student and teacher, in overcoming my cravings, and dealing with life's ups and downs etc. Reinharz describes the experiential methodology as gradually assisting the person to create his or her own identity as a social scientist (Reinharz 1979). Similarly I think this methodology assisted me to assimilate existing knowledge and create some connection between my social work identity and role as a yoga teacher in the addiction field. Finally, the action research component records both the inner and outer progress of the action and reflection on the action in the action research cycle. Specifically the action in question is the teaching of classes in a drug detoxification centre.

The closest action research methodological approach to this combination is the work of Cunningham (Cunningham 1988). Describing his research approach as 'Interactive holistic research', Cunningham recommends the use of multiple approaches in experiential research and describes the methodological plan as the preparation phase. Favoring the importance of the researcher being immersed in the field so that the data generated is rich and rewarding, Cunningham advocates a variety of recording approaches including note taking, audio and video recording to assist with the analysis of the material. In this research I also used tape (two focus groups) and video recording (two interviews), note taking (focus groups and two interviews) and diary keeping (my personal practice).

He identifies the following methodologies, which are directly relevant to this thesis. These are forms of collaborative research, which, in my case, involved the bringing together in two focus groups. (Cunningham defines my approach as a type 2 group as it involves people talking about activities occurring outside each others working environments, rather than activities known to all the participants). Secondly, I use dialogic research, which Cunningham defines as dialogue between two individuals. In my case, this involved semi-structured, focused conversations with two senior yoga teachers and two

other yoga teachers with significant experience teaching yoga inside prisons that were not able to attend the focus groups. In addition, dialogic research has been conducted with other individuals who are able to contribute unique insights and comment, for example, the program founder and director of *Somebody's Daughter Theatre Group*²³, for her expertise in surviving for 20 years in building a transformational program for female prisoners, many with addiction issues. (Both methodologies above involve interacting and talking with others to identify key issues, concepts, and other matters and to extract practice wisdom from experienced practitioners).

As we need to become effective researchers of our own experience, I also used experiential research, which, according to Cunningham, is a primary methodology. In my case, this involves the challenge of addressing my own cravings through yoga disciplines, actually maintaining my own daily yoga practices amongst other competing priorities, teaching yoga in normal classes and classes for addicts, and, finally, examining how yoga is affecting my daily life experiences. In this experiential research, there are elements of dialogue research with close collaborators and students.

Finally there is the work of action research, which in Cunningham's view, must be *contextually located* in the areas of existing theory and ideas, other people's ideas and research and other situational factors. In terms of my research, this context would include understanding:

- a. The current dominant policy and practices in the management of addictions and in addressing offending behaviours in corrections;
- b. Yoga as a part of the range of complementary therapies available to assist addicts and as an educational or recreational group work activity in corrections;
- c. The corrections and addiction field and/or yoga experiences of the participants in the two focus groups and dialogue interviews;
- d. My history and involvement in yoga and this field of service and in social work;

²³ Maud Clark is Director of Somebody's Daughter Theatre Company

- e. Yoga's history and relevance to this problem through time to the present;
- f. Current experience of yoga in Australia and overseas in this field;
- g. The theory and practice of yoga and transformation;
- h. Learning from similar programs operating elsewhere at present and in the past, and, finally;
- i. The actual settings in which the action research element takes place.

Transpersonal and Action Research Methods

I complement these areas with the insights of transpersonal methodology, which allows the researcher to examine and utilize insights developed outside the immediate field of service and even from ancient wisdom knowledge such as in the yoga sutras (Braud & Anderson 1998, p. 18). I can also draw upon recent research conducted by others on people who have used yoga to address addiction issues (Holthaus 2004, Duncombe, Komorosky, Wong-Kim and Turner 2005).

The primary agent of research in yoga is the yoga practitioner himself. This process is not uncommon in the social and psychological research fields. Jung and Freud analyzed their own dreams and drew substantial conclusions from this source. Historically, social workers were taught, through process recording, to analyze their own reactions and responses to clients and use this material to develop their responses to issues.

Cherry states that, in action research, the researcher is confronted with the questions: What am I really doing? What is the key question I'm investigating? How often do we proffer advice we most need ourselves? She claims there are two journeys in action research: The inner journey and the outer journey (Cherry 1999). My outer journey included teaching weekly yoga classes to addicts in detoxification. My inner journey is all the challenges along the way, the doubts, and hopefully my discoveries along the path. In this context, Reinharz makes an important plea for the experiential researcher to document failures, in addition to positive results to avoid "idealized accounts" and

maintain inquiry as discovery on three levels - practitioner-researcher, the problem being investigated and the process of the research (Reinharz 1979). Critical Incident Analysis can be used in these circumstances (Cherry 1999 p. 9).

Cherry defines action research as involving three inter-related strands or layers of action, learning and knowledge (Cherry 1999 p. 17-29). The action strand is the “day to day action-including action, which challenge existing paradigms that lock people into dysfunctional ways of doing things” (Cherry 1999 p.15). For example, how do I maintain my daily yoga practice and prevent the yoga class becoming a token recreational class unconnected to the rest of the program in a correctional facility or drug detoxification service?

The knowledge strand includes the “work of understanding the multiple and contradictory perceptions of that work by players involved” (Cherry 1999 p. 8). Here, the focus group technology may help to improve the planning and design of new yoga programs by gaining greater insight into why certain opinions are held which may lead to improved marketing programs.

The learning strand involves “that which builds knowledge and understanding, theory and individual and collective practice to enhance and enrich the future practice of all those involved” (Cherry 1999, p. 8). For Cherry, a key requirement is the maintenance of critical subjectivity. The researcher’s own behaviour and practice becomes the subject of research, which is subject to sustained reflection and inquiry. The analogy Cherry uses in her book is to the skilled craftsmen, which is very similar to how a skilled social worker or yoga teacher works. To quote Cherry, one is “working carefully with what is, while nurturing and shaping the possibilities for what might be” (Cherry 1999, p. 15).

The action research journey is described by Cherry as “the gradual discovery and growth of a process which I did not know” (Cherry 1999 p. 17). The maintenance of critical subjectivity includes the process of “wearing the project like a garment” (Cherry 1999 p. 78) that is, living the yoga teacher in the addiction field, “believing in it fully and at the same time watchful for

shortcomings, noticing more than belief in it entails, and holding alternative views available in the mind at the ready” (Cherry 1999 p. 79). Cherry also includes the transformational process of “knowing through becoming” (Braud Anderson 1998) we find in transpersonal research. She states that in action research “we make and remake ourselves” (Cherry 1999 p. 10).

The medium (i.e. yoga in this case) and the meaning of yoga,(i.e. what I say it is, after deep reflection, study and analysis), are essentially interpenetrated. In other words I tend to create my own yoga teaching and practice approach. This research methodology incorporates this concept in exploring the extent to which yoga does transform addictions and what elements, values, and processes yoga practice requires to achieve this aim with the target group.

The Validity of Transpersonal Knowledge

Ken Wilber argues that empirical science would have to reject its own validity if it rejects the existence of interior states by referring to the academic disciplines of logic and mathematics, which are not delivered or confirmed by the senses. He proposes a broader definition of empirical, based upon evidence for assertions and not merely dogma, faith or conjectures. He then proposes three elements that must be contained to establish valid scientific knowledge. These are an instrumental injunction, which means you need to follow a practice, then accurately observe what happens, (which he calls direct apprehension), and finally, communal confirmation or rejection which obliges you to check out your results against others who have completed the same experiment (Wilber 1998 p. 156).

Wilber points out that the Thomas Kuhn notion of a paradigm included the requirement that there was an actual practice attached to the paradigm, an injunction or accepted way in which to work (Kuhn 1970 p. 10). This is exactly what the founders of great spiritual traditions have done, including the yoga tradition (Wilber 1998 p. 168). In terms of this research project I will be using the triangulation research strategy, which is based upon developing reliability and validity upon similar findings obtained using different research methods,

in this case, focus groups, dialogic interviews, the research literature and my own experience. This approach incorporates the three elements proposed by Wilber for accurate transpersonal knowledge to develop.

In the yoga research paradigm, yoga starts with explaining the various aspects of the unreflected spontaneous consciousness of our everyday mind. Phenomenology observes that we are able to reflect upon our spontaneous moving mind and this is considered to be a modified form of consciousness (Sartre 2004). In Yoga it is asserted that there is a further dimension to consciousness that arrives when we are capable of “cessation of the misidentification with the modifications of the mind” (Whicher 1998 p. 1). In yoga this is referred to as the experience of the seer and it can result in a form of direct or inspired perception. While Wilber maintains that his approach enables this form of perception to be empirically based, Coward argues that we should remain “critical but open” to the results of transpersonal research. (Coward 2002 p.92). Paul Tillich asserts that the yogic or mystical experience is denied by the modern experience of meaninglessness, and that only absolute faith, which includes an element of skepticism, is capable of transcending meaninglessness (Tillich 1974 p. 172).

Whether the self-knowledge obtained through yogic meditation is valid empirically is debatable, but what can be asserted is that this form of “intellectual brooding” results in practical inspiration which helps people deal with their daily lives in a more constructive manner (Johns 1992). It might be more appropriate to refer this form of knowledge to the personal or intuitive truths that Moustakis refers to in his analysis of heuristic research (Moustakis p. 23-24).

Data Collection

My experience as a Yoga Teacher and Student

Data came from multiple sources. There was my own practice experience of teaching in-patients at a Drug Detoxification Centre on a weekly basis over about two years. I had also taught yoga previously at a centre on an

outpatient basis and operated a free yoga program for addicts in recovery and other persons from a church hall. There is the practice experience as a being a student of yoga which includes the challenge of maintaining a daily personal practice. For me this involved practicing regular yoga and meditation and keeping a daily meditation diary.

Focus Groups for Yoga teachers and Health Professionals

I conducted two full afternoon focus groups at RMIT University and invited interested yoga teachers, some of whom had extensive experience teaching yoga in the addiction field, (including detoxification centers, outpatient drug and alcohol counseling centers, youth drug counseling services and others), and in adult and juvenile correctional and forensic services. I had originally intended in the focus groups to invite only yoga teachers, but I found there was interest generated from health professional staff, (mainly the nursing staff looking after people in the addiction withdrawal unit in which I taught).

In this context it is worth noting that that sampling or recruitment strategy for the focus groups relied heavily upon word of mouth by the researcher and Gerald Frape. At the time this research was conducted only a handful of yoga teachers in Victoria had demonstrated involvement in using yoga in addiction recovery. The researcher received a list from the office of corrections showing all yoga and meditation programs that were operating across Victorian Prisons. Many of those program turned out to be not operating and nominal only. Two Interviews were obtained through this method. Bouyancy, Moreland Hall and other major addiction recovery service providers where there were known yoga programs were contacted. Focus group members were obtained through this method. In addition a number of the major yoga studios and centers were also contacted and information sent of the focus groups. This generated more interest and members of the focus groups. Finally both the researcher and Gerald Frape were personally aware of yoga teachers and others who were interested in this topic. The researcher also chose to interview two of his yoga teachers, one who had extensive experience teaching in a female correctional facility and is also a senior yoga teacher and

the other because of her extensive knowledge of yoga philosophy and its practical application. The presence of three residential treatment workers from the centre where the researcher taught yoga was unexpected but welcome in that their perspective added a health professional dimension to the discussions which was sympathetic to complementary therapy tools like yoga in addiction recovery.

One yoga teacher who attended the second focus group was previously a heroin addict and had used yoga to overcome her addiction. There were some other “interested stakeholders” who managed to attend. One participant used new age methodologies which included yoga experience. Len Tierney reflected on this phenomenon in an article on social work research where he noted that all research occurs in a political environment and other stakeholders and bystanders are part of the process²⁴ (Tierney 1993, p. 15).

Gerald Frape, senior associate of the Community Advocacy Unit at RMIT University, assisted me in this task. Gerald has extensive experience in meditation, practices yoga and moderates focus groups as part of his professional business. Gerald helped edit the two discussion papers I wrote that were handed out before the focus groups to participants to encourage their participation and provide them with “something back for their involvement in the research” and, hopefully, some thought provoking ideas to bounce off in the discussion. The discussion papers were based upon my literature searches on the topics of “Yoga and Transformation” and “Yoga Programs in Addiction Recovery and Corrections”. Although not all participants had read the documents prior to the focus groups, they helped in creating a more focused discussion on the key issues on these topics. While they may be considered to have shaped the discussion in the focus groups, the discussion papers did not appear to have influenced the direction of the discussions or the views of the participants. The discussion papers were not referred to in the focus groups and participants were focused on discussing their own experiences.

²⁴ For further information on participants see the section on *Obtaining Participants for The Search Conferences* on page 63 of this thesis.

Gerald facilitated the first part of the first focus group and I took minutes. He wasn't involved in the second focus group, but remained very interested in the progress of this research and in this promotion of yoga and meditation in this field.

The focus groups began with a short yoga class of 30 minutes duration conducted by two separate teachers who were attending the conferences. The actual focus groups began and took about two hours each. The groups were audio taped and professionally transcribed verbatim. At the end of each focus group, the participants were provided with refreshments and some informal discussion continued but this was not recorded.

Interviews with Yoga Teachers and Others

I conducted semi-structured interviews with two of my own yoga teachers from different schools. Mark Gibson is a senior Iyengar yoga teacher and operates Doutta Galla Yoga Studio in Moonee Ponds. Mark was asked by Maude Clark, from Somebody's Daughter Theatre Group, which conducts theatre with female prisoners, to teach yoga inside a Melbourne female prison. Mark had taught in the prison there for a long period of time, so he could draw upon this experience in addition to his general comments about yoga and addiction.

I also interviewed Yoga Teacher Clare Fleming, a student of the T.K.V. Desikachar, because of her extensive understanding of *patanjali's* yoga *sutras*. At the time I was a student of Clare's in that she was teaching me to chant as a meditation practice and study the *sutras*. I would consider both Clare and Mark two of the most experienced, skillful and astute yoga teachers in Victoria in their respective specializations.²⁵ The questions for Clare were focused on her in-depth understanding of the yoga *sutras* and the implications for dealing with addictions through a yoga practice. The interview with Mark

²⁵ I have not disguised these two teachers, because they were videotaped and both were comfortable to be identified in this research and acknowledged but I have used pseudonyms for all the focus group participants and other yoga teachers to protect their identities.

Gibson was broader ranging covering his experiences of teaching yoga in a female prison and his understanding of what yoga has to say about addiction recovery. Both these interviews were recorded on video camera.

When I was advertising the focus groups, I phoned and wrote to every prison in Victoria, Australia via the prison program manager. This function in the prison manages most programs delivered to prisoners, including yoga and meditation if they are supplied. I obtained a list of existing prison programs and contacted the program managers that indicated they had meditation or yoga classes. I discovered that the listed programs were not very accurate, and tended to overstate the number of actual programs operating. Through this process and other avenues, I did manage to contact two yoga teachers who had taught extensively in two separate Victorian prisons.

Both these teachers taught Satyananda Yoga, which operates from an ashram based at Rockley near Daylesford, Victoria in Australia. This ashram had a reputation for occasionally accepting referrals of people from drug treatment centers as residents, before some negative experiences stopped this process. The ashram has some existing yoga teaching arrangements with youth training centers and some adult correctional facilities, which tend to be based in rural areas. I gained the impression from speaking to and meeting these two teachers that they were very competent and confident yoga teachers and both were certified by the ashram via a two-year intensive teacher-training course. I recorded these interviews by taking notes during the interviews with the participants.

One of the teachers had been teaching yoga for three years in Port Phillip Prison, a large male prison operated by private enterprise under government tender and housing about 700 inmates. She ran the yoga classes for about three years before they stopped the program officially because of lack of funds. I interviewed this person, whom I will call "Brenda", over dinner. At the time of the interview, Brenda was studying for a human services qualification. I spoke informally with her prison program manager to get her views on the yoga program that had operated.

The other yoga teacher “Richard” was a psychologist based in a rural prison, which provides specialist programs for adult male sex offenders. Richard had worked in the prison for about eighteen months and had very carefully constructed two yoga programs for twelve prisoners at a time for ten sessions of yoga, one class per week of one and a half hours duration. These sessions were voluntary and offered as a complementary therapy to the weekly therapy sessions for sex offenders. Richard had left the prison for a community psychologist position as he found the daily prison setting too work oppressive. I phoned Richard and discussed his experiences of the yoga program, the prison environment’s impact on the program and what he thought of the impact of the program.

Literature Reviews

Literature Searches were carried out via all social science data bases on yoga programs used in social work, yoga and transformation, yoga and addiction recovery, yoga and mediation programs used in corrections and/or addiction recovery, spirituality and social work practice including the application of body therapy and the topical subject of social work and the body. In looking at the yoga and meditation programs existing in the world I made contact with some of these people and became aware of some people doing similar research to my own such as Stephany Holthaus phenomenological study of yoga during recovery from drugs or alcohol which became her published PhD in clinical psychology (Holthaus 2004).

Obtaining Participants for the Focus Groups

In addition to what has been described above, I contacted a number of yoga schools and teachers I knew that taught in the addiction field. I also contacted some drug treatment centers where yoga was or had been taught. A number of people contacted me via the letters of invitation, which explicitly stated that the focus groups were part of my Masters of Social Work Thesis. People basically self selected through this process.

Participants were not required to attend both focus groups. They could choose which focus group they preferred to attend. Two Saturday afternoons were chosen, a fortnight apart, specifically because yoga classes are rarely taught at this weekend time, allowing the greatest number of yoga teachers to attend.

The first focus group was on “yoga and transformation” which looked at the issues surrounding the teacher’s views of what they were actually teaching and how it helped people tackle addiction. The second focus group was on “yoga programs” aiming at looking at the factors teachers identified that programs needed to address to be successful. What happened in practice is that both discussion topics tended to overlap. The convenors attempted to keep participants on topic, without preventing a rich and open discussion from taking place.

While I have disguised the names of the focus group participants and other yoga teachers by giving them a pseudonym, I have provided enough personal information on their identity and motivation for being interviewed or attending the focus groups to allow the reader of this thesis to understand something of each individual’s background and motivation for attending and help contextualise the key themes that emerged in discussion and key findings as reported in the next three chapters of this thesis.

Focus group One “Yoga and Transformation”

The participants (excluding myself and co-facilitator Gerald Frape) were:

“John”- A chi-gong Yoga teacher, a form of yoga practice originating from China, who has studied meditation extensively in Thailand with Buddhist monks, teaches yoga full time in the community and is establishing his own school. John currently teaches at a juvenile correctional facility and adult forensic correctional facility. John is finding that some Asian youth trainees are modeling themselves on him as their teacher. He finds it frustrating that there is nowhere in Melbourne for these students to reside and practice yoga and meditation full time upon release from custody to remove themselves

from their negative peer group influence. He is interested in establishing a centre with others that could meet this need.

“Isabelle”-A creative dance and yoga teacher with about 10 year’s yoga teaching experience, currently studying for a Masters in Psychology on the effects of yoga on children. Isabelle was teaching yoga at an outreach youth drug counseling service and found that the staff needed the yoga more than the young people who would only turn up sporadically. Isabelle had a research interest in attending the search conference.

“Julie”, “Peta” and “Joanne”- Three Psychiatric nurses who work at the drug detoxification centre where I have worked as a yoga teacher. They have between ten to twenty years approximate experience each in the field, and are interested in alternative therapies and meditation. Some have practiced meditation and yoga in their private lives and previously tried to conduct complementary therapies in other addiction recovery units and experienced opposition from other unit staff and management. I was very pleased to have their involvement in this research as it was a recognition from the unit staff that my yoga teaching was valuable for the unit.

“Mary” -A younger Iyengar yoga teacher, just graduated, who is employed by a drug counselling agency that provides a range of complementary therapies, including yoga, on an outpatient basis. Mary teaches two yoga classes per week at the agency to a core group of participants mostly in recovery from heroin and prescription drugs. On methadone, and sometimes using painkillers, these students highlight a significant practice issue. Mary is having considerable success with her students who are making real progress in their practice and she has even got a few attending her home based yoga school and considering doing teacher training in yoga.

“Brian” -A Gita yoga teacher, with a martial arts, tai chi background, currently teaching yoga and meditation in the community. A qualified engineer who sees yoga as working like a communication mechanism to enhance the

functioning of various systems in the body and mind. Brian is a personal friend with an interest in this area.

“Audrey”- A kinesiologist “with a hippie background and proud of it” who comes along more out of curiosity. Audrey has practiced yoga and meditation, and is interested in how diet and toxicity contribute to the maintenance of addictions. (See the comment from an article by Len Tierney above about the “extras” in research-Audrey reflects this phenomena in research)

“Jennifer”- A young Iyengar Yoga teacher, single mother with young child who has practiced yoga for 10 years and just graduated from Iyengar teacher training. Curiosity is her primary motivation in attending.

Focus Group Two on Yoga Program Issues in the Addiction and Corrections Field.

The participants (excluding the writer) were:

“Trisha”- A yoga teacher with 6 years successful yoga teaching experience in Shadow yoga, a yoga school created by former Iyengar trained Shandor Remite. Trisha is interested in this area. Her father was a chemist who worked in the inner city area and had a methadone dispensary. She had discussed her involvement with her father who encouraged her to participate. So there was a family motivation that also prompted her interest.

“Anna”- An Iyengar yoga teacher who wants to teach outside the studio in corrections or the addiction field. She has a strong social action attitude to the world and has written to yoga journals criticizing the commercialization of yoga.

“John” and “Mary” from the first session attend the second session.

“Geoffrey” -A Gita yoga teacher, financial planner by profession, who worked in social security for many years, and started the Gita Yoga Drug Treatment Outreach Program at Moreland Hall. This program has been operating for about ten years using volunteer yoga teachers conducting a class once per

week in the adult detoxification unit. Geoffrey has more experience in teaching yoga in addiction recovery centres than any other practitioner but he does not work full time as a yoga teacher, preferring to use yoga more as an outside interest.

“Phoebe”-, A young Iyengar yoga teacher recently graduated from a two year training program, (which the writer also completed), and teaching post graduate for two years. Phoebe was a heroin addict for 10 years, and “living on the streets” who overcame addiction through yoga. She is not ready to teach other addicts and in her own words is “still in the tail end of recovery”. Phoebe doesn’t want to be surrounded by “that energy” which I discuss in this thesis as a significant challenge to all yoga teachers in this field. Phoebe practiced Siddha yoga and lived at their ashram in Fitzroy in Melbourne Australia for months to get out of the addict lifestyle. In her words yoga “saved her”. It was a big step for her to attend the search conference and share her story.

Making Sense of the Focus Group Data

Following upon Wilber (1998) and Dick (2000), the transpersonal nature of the practice and the research requires that I examine the themes and reflective comments from my personal practice, plus interviews and focus groups to look for confirmation from all sources. There may also be themes and findings that are reflected in only one source such as the focus group. There could still be useful practical knowledge from one or two sources, although it would not be empirically valid, according to Dick or Wilber.

I examined the literature on effective focus group practice and analysis. (Morgan 1993; Stewart 1990). The recommendations in respect to the number of participants per group and the style of leadership, atmosphere, and recording were followed to obtain useful data.

Analyzing the verbatim transcripts involved:

- Making summary descriptive statements of the key themes emerging from the raw data;

- Considering the context of the discussion, and what triggered off the debate;
- Considering the specificity of the reported comments, from vague to highly specific;
- Identifying the “big ideas” or central themes emerging;
- Cutting and pasting together printed copies of the transcripts under themes and issues that were discussed; and,
- Comparing these themes and findings with my own practice experience and the separate interviews conducted with the four other yoga teachers.

The key findings and themes drawn from all three sources were triangulated and meet Wilber’s definition of empirical transpersonal knowledge and Dick’s requirement for effective research findings for action research.

Limitations of the Data

I discussed the value of mindful research in establishing the research questions, which was to obtain the views of yoga teachers and others as “experts” on the benefits of yoga in the addiction field, establish a place in social work for yoga and look at the programmatic considerations flowing from this focus. I also intend to draw upon my own experience as a yoga teacher and student in teaching yoga in this area and dealing with my own cravings. Dick (2000) had pointed to the importance of triangulation or the dialectic in confirming the validity of action research findings and Wilber’s requirement for sound empirical transpersonal knowledge essentially required the same of this research.

Despite all the above, there are limitations to this study which require explicit acknowledgement:

Objectives

This research is a descriptive exploratory account of the views of yoga teachers and other health professionals on the value of yoga in the addiction field and some key programmatic requirements for effective operations. It is also making use of my own experiences as a yoga teacher and student. It

does not aim to evaluate the efficacy of yoga *per se* in this field. My research cannot prove that yoga is beneficial for any addicts in particular circumstances.

The circumstances of people with addictions was not a primary focus of this research, other than recognition of the programmatic requirements noted by yoga teachers and others close to service delivery of the marginalized and excluded circumstances of most class participants.

My desire to create a place for yoga in social work reflects on my own developing identity as a yoga teacher and social worker and my interest in pursuing this work in the addiction recovery and corrections fields. It is part of an action plan to pursue this research further, based upon the findings of this four-year research journey. Obviously the findings in this area of the research are limited to my development as a social worker and yoga teacher and would not be relevant to other social workers.

Data Collection

The two focus groups may have missed some yoga teachers in the addiction field because I did not advertise widely enough. There is a very small possibility that some potentially interested yoga teachers in Victoria teaching in this area were overlooked or choose not to participate. The collection of data on my yoga practice relies upon my own account of my experience and its authenticity.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

As I have previously stated the interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner with an interview guide but also allowing the interview to move in a direction which gained the most useful information. An analytical induction method was used to analyse the data obtained from both the interviews and the focus groups. (Minichiello et. al. 1995) This process aims to identify the key themes and issues emerging from the data and reflect on what relevance this has to the key questions being asked by the research.

Finally my own experience and literature reviews helped identify the key themes and helped me choose the key extracts from the data to highlight what was being discovered. The requirement that key themes and findings must emerge from all research methods means that some valuable outcomes cannot be confidently recommended. This information could be quite valuable in itself but the triangulation requirement seems to be important to this form of qualitative research to be credible.

Participants

This research is primarily examining the views of yoga teachers about yoga in the addiction recovery and corrections fields. By definition, the views of addicts and others as participants in the programs were not solicited, although one of our yoga teachers was an ex-addict. Of course, all yoga teachers have experience of their cravings or addictions either via their own life experiences and/or through the addiction recovery experiences of other friends, acquaintances and family.

The views of managers or policy developers or others in the corrections and addictions field were not explored, other than informally as part of operating in this area. It was not a focus of this research. It was good to obtain the views of the health professionals closest to the delivery of the programs who were interested enough to attend the focus groups outside of their working hours. It needs to be acknowledged that their views on yoga cannot be said to represent anything other than their own personal views.

The yoga teachers were from a number of different schools and styles of yoga reflecting the popularity and interest of these particular schools and styles of yoga in Melbourne. The number of yoga teachers involved in the research, thirteen, is small and does reflect the bias of the researcher for the popular “Iyengar” school. However there was a representation of other schools of yoga (Satyananda, Gita, Oki, Desikachar, and Shadow) to allow for a reasonable cross section of the Victorian spread of yoga schools and teaching styles.

Moreover, to my knowledge, there are only a few yoga teachers in Victoria actually working in addiction recovery and corrections. This study is the only study conducted in Victoria Australia, to have obtained the views of this number of yoga teachers with a significant level of practice experience of teaching yoga in the addiction and corrections fields. There is a possibility that yoga teachers teaching in this area in Victoria were overlooked or chose not to be involved in the research.

Of the thirteen yoga teachers, six²⁶ (not including myself) had more than one year's experience of yoga teaching in addiction recovery or corrections. Some had taught for many more years. The rationale for including other yoga teachers without this actual experience in the field was to draw into the debate and discussion, some of the teachers in the local yoga community, interested in this area, with the hope of beginning to engage this wider yoga community in the field in the longer term.

The spread of actual programs was very comprehensive covering yoga programs operated in three adult correctional facilities (two male, one female), one adult forensic facility, one youth training facility, one specialist drug counselling agency with a complementary therapy focus, one youth outreach drug counselling agency, and two adult drug detoxification units. The only missing ingredient was a yoga teacher operating in one of the few long-term drug residential treatment units. There was also no yoga teacher from any private operated, "for profit" addiction recovery service.

Summary and Conclusions

Through the implementation of focus groups as a form of collaborative inquiry, interviewing as a form of dialogic research, experiential inquiry and the action research cycle involving critical subjectivity and incident analysis, and combining this recording and action with literature research, one develops

²⁶ This does not include the yoga teachers with extensive teaching experience in this area who were interviewed one to one.

multiple sources of qualitative data on the application of yoga in overcoming addictions. What I have found is that the independent methods used did produce similar results in the form of recommendations and key themes. As a teacher, these findings provide a powerful foundation for one's approach to the subject. In the research literature, convergent thinking and results from multiple research methods can increase the internal validity of action research (Cherry 1999).

Over the next three chapters I report the findings of the two focus groups, interviews and literature within each chapter dealing with how yoga can assist in addiction recovery, what yoga understands by transformation and the programmatic issues for yoga programs in addiction recovery that emerged from the data. I have chosen to report these findings in the body of the text of each chapter rather than create a separate chapter on the actual findings of each data method.

The action research cycle requires the researcher to implement action without knowing everything and also the quality of "wu-wei" that is non-action, of not forcing movement but of going with the flow. Time is needed for non-defensive reflection, and meditation on the action and reflection and this brings a creative quality or higher awareness to the research and the action processes. It is this quality that defines the transpersonal research approach and what Paulo Freire described as conscientization in which we know for ourselves our reality and can transform it (Freire 1972).

Chapter 4 Yoga and Addiction

This chapter examines the theories and meaning of addiction in the context of discussing yoga theory and practice as it relates to addiction. I look at yoga being used as a complementary therapy alongside other treatments and support services and the need for the yoga teacher to address their own cravings and addictions through yoga practice. I look at how yoga creates a contradiction in the recovering addict's life through regular practice and helps control impulses to "act out". Yoga teachers may anticipate initial resistance followed by growing confidence and joyful experiences in their students in recovery. Yoga can act as a form of "adult play", which can reinvigorate creativity in adults. A transpersonal approach enables the addict to use the concept of personal shadow first developed by Carl Jung to accept and transform their addictions and see recovery as a journey rather than a progression. Yoga provides a range of techniques that enable addicts using the twelve-step program to connect to their higher power. For others it provides a centering process. Yoga does provide a challenge to societal factors that contribute to addiction. It regards our normal waking consciousness as addicted via the senses to external stimuli. Yoga's community focus can extend beyond recovery thinking to new lifestyles for addicts in recovery that challenge expectations placed on addicts by our society.

Definition of Addiction

Addiction is an extreme, acute form of our natural tendency to become attached to pleasurable events, objects, activities, people or feelings (Bailey 1997, p. 65). A sign of addiction is when I lose my inner composure and peace after a behaviour or activity is withdrawn or unavailable or even after doing the behaviour and activity. Despite being aware of not being centred, a craving to continue the behaviour or practice is felt and I am aware that the beginnings of the problem exist.

Attempting a definition of addiction has been compared to “opening a Pandora’s box” (McMurran 1994, p. 1) given that definitions of addiction depend upon the model of addiction or addiction discourses that are advocated by the writers (Keane 2002). The various models of addiction are better understood as windows of exploration into the complexities of the addiction phenomena.

Although many addictive substances and activities are experienced as highly pleasurable, most theoretical models of addiction consider that the substance or activity itself is not necessarily addictive. For example, when I broke my leg in five places at age 17 and was in hospital for a week I was receiving four hourly dosages of morphine for the pain. I did not become addicted due to the medical management of my condition²⁷. It is the host itself and the environment, which impacts upon the person, that creates the possibility of an addiction. However, some substances or activities could be described as potentially highly addictive for most people, such as the practice of occasional heroin use through which a person runs a serious risk of developing an addiction.

In the medical and moral models, the substance or activity was thought to provide crucial ingredients for the body and mind to become addicted. Emphasis was placed upon the negative effects of the substance or activity and fear of the implications for some individuals who had a pre-existing propensity to crave these experiences or objects.

The subjective experience of the person plays an important part in determining whether an addiction is present or whether a less compulsive behaviour is occurring. Addiction has been defined as:

“A degree of involvement in a behaviour that can function both to produce pleasure and provide relief from discomfort to the point where the costs appear to outweigh the benefits” (McMurran 1994 p. 4).

²⁷ Other patients may have become addicted without proper medical supervision.

I find this definition useful because it allows for subjectivity, includes a harms focus, without a moral overtone, and provides broadness in including any form of addictive behaviour and action. When one looks at addictive behaviour, a lot of the experience is aimed at altering the normal state of consciousness, experiencing a blissful or oblivion experience of some kind. One of my yoga teachers I interviewed asked the question, “*are addicts mistaking the trance for transcendence?*”²⁸ The trance state experienced through addiction can include elements of dullness, elation and bliss.

The notion of addiction involves the handing over of one’s power to a substance or activity where the relationship to the action becomes the most important aspect of the person’s life. Bates writes that

“In the addiction process, first the person takes the chemical, (insert activity if you wish), then the chemical takes the person and in the last stage the chemical takes the chemical, for there is no longer any person left. The relationship to the chemical becomes the most important relationship to the person. Family job and values are secondary” (Bates 1986 p. 42)

Some writers claim that what is missing from the “recovery thought” world view on addiction is any mention of how social institutions and dominant culture can cause and sustain addiction particularly amongst disempowered or marginalized populations (Morell 1996 p. 306). Yoga has a sympathetic view to this critique in that our normal waking consciousness is considered to be in constant change or movement because of our constant search in this state for distraction in the external world and our sense of separation from all things external to ourselves. In Yoga, addiction is an extreme obstacle to spiritual development and higher levels of maturity.

In the first focus group the definition of addiction was a “hotspot” issue that caused controversy amongst the participants. Brian reframed an addiction as a positive in a student who was caught in a condemnatory mode where he experienced guilt and condemnation from his family for his addiction. This prompted someone to suggest that sometimes people are motivated towards

²⁸ Mark Gibson Senior Iyengar Yoga Teacher. Doutta Galla Yoga Studio.

the dark side. Brian replied that his yoga approach involved two things- one is that we are responsible for our actions, two, that we use some reality framework to process our experience. Hence even when people do negative things they think it will benefit them. This was challenged by Mary who strongly disagreed. She stated:

“I think there’s also a chemical level of dependency that you’re not looking at. A lot of the people that use drugs hate the fact they use but if they don’t use they get really sick and would be in a lot of pain. If you ever seen someone withdraw from methadone, they get very sick and have a horrible experience”

This latter view is focusing on the powerful withdrawal affects involved in some addictions. Whether the addict is responsible or other factors contribute, addiction is definitely a form of repetitive behaviour that eventually starts to have more harmful impacts on the person and those around them (Barber 1995).

Yoga as a Complementary Therapy in the Addiction Field

Yoga is used as a complimentary therapy in drug treatment services and in some correctional facilities as a form of recreational and/or educational pursuit. In some agencies it is built into the core delivery of complementary services and in others it seems to be more like an optional “add-on” unconnected to the core delivery of counselling and other professional services. It is primarily made available as a form of stress relief or relaxation via physical exercises or postures, breathing exercises and relaxation strategies.

The rationale for including yoga in the complementary therapies “on offer” also includes the belief, strongly held in the addiction field, that addicts need to “fall in love” with some other activity outside of drugs and negative addictions, that is health promoting and likely to provide a more powerful and meaningful lifestyle than the considerable power of the addict lifestyle (Homberg 2001).

The use of yoga in the addiction field also reflects its growing popularity in the Western world particularly amongst health conscious professionals. The idea of introducing yoga to addicts is that clients who respond well to yoga can then be referred to a local instructor. This is one of the rationales for the seeding class in the drug treatment center or correctional facility. The seeding class is appropriate for individuals in the pre-contemplation or contemplation stages of recovery. In practice, most residents leaving these services face immediate practical and emotional problems. Their exploration of a spiritual practice post-release is more likely to occur much later after the immediate survival and practical needs have been addressed.

Perceived Benefits of Yoga to Addicts

Yoga as a therapeutic component in treating addiction has been found to integrate the whole person (body mind and spirit), strengthen the physical body, relax the mind, increase bodily and spiritual awareness, release tension build up, promote proper breathing techniques, increase posture awareness, improve coping skills, and encourage determination and concentration (Calajoe 1986). The mindfulness practices, where the various physical work helps to bring the awareness of the students into the present moment, also help to encourage a greater awareness of feelings present in the body-mind continuum. Certain postures such as back bends which open up the front of the body can help the person become aware of emotions which tend to be experienced in the solar plexus area²⁹. In addition, Yoga can also be viewed as a form of adult play, which opens adults to new and challenging experiences in a progressive manner. While participants may initially balk at doing these strange exercises, “many express amazement at the exceptionally good feeling they had at the end of the session and begin to look forward to the next yoga session each day” (Calajoe 1986 p. 39). Yoga also has definite physiological benefits such as increased flexibility, strength and general enhanced physical fitness. Perhaps less appreciated is the commonly reported feeling of general well being and even elation that can

²⁹ The solar plexus is located in the stomach area. In Yoga physiology there are seven chakras or energy centers in the body. These are thought to equate to levels of consciousness and our emotional capacities.

come from yoga practice on a mental and physical level. It is this benefit that enables yoga practitioners to reduce their dependence on seeking the same benefits from external sources.

In this context it is worth quoting from Joseph Campbell, who in his life exploration of the world's mythologies, stated that "what we're seeking is an experience of being alive, so that our life experiences on the purely physical plane will have resonance's within our own innermost being and reality so that we actually feel the rapture of being alive, a rapture beyond meaning and meaninglessness." (Cited in Noel 1994 p. 34).

David Tacey places the same emphasis on the experiential aspect but he prefers the everyday nature of the sacred in his definition of spirituality. He states:

'I think spirituality should be seen less as an unusual achievement of a special or gifted human personality than a natural state to which we always have access, if we manage to relax our conditioned defenses and resistances long enough to admit the presence of the sacred. Spirituality is our birthright not some kind of bonus or added extra to life'. (Tacey 2000 p. 18)

Commenting on the degraded sacred in Australian society, David Tacey writes of the loss of spiritual ecstasy and the provision by alcohol and drugs of an artificial ecstasy. He writes:

'Ecstasy comes from the root ex stasis, to stand outside oneself. If we do not cultivate an other or outside place outside the ego, then inferior ecstasy will invade the body and the ego destroying both in a horrifying fury which one can witness most Friday nights outside certain pubs'. (Tacey 1995 p. 9)

Yoga is one way in which to experience this rapture, but it requires the student to adopt a gradual process that needs perseverance to provide the long lasting benefits that addicts look for in their compulsive activities or substances. Through various spiritual practices we can develop these potentials inherent in our person. All religious and spiritual approaches have developed disciplines or practices that help the person get the most from their commitment or faith. In most traditions, the practices only prepare the person

to receive the benefits of the way. These are considered gifts or grace received but not anticipated. There is a danger in speaking of ecstatic experiences. They are considered the sideshow of spiritual development and the practitioner is often warned not to become too attached to these highs, special gifts or spiritual experiences. The same path also includes the “dark night of the soul” which is only experienced after the positive side effects of the spiritual path have been thoroughly experienced. The dark night of the soul is seen as a positive sign of significant progress because it implies the practitioner is capable of benefiting from feelings of emptiness, loss and joylessness. It is not related to the more common malaise that might be experienced by a person with a positive addiction as described by Glasser (Glasser 1985). Most people with addiction issues are a long distance from a real “dark night” episode as described in the mystical philosophical literature, so that highlighting some of the likely benefits of practicing a spirituality like yoga is not harmful as it does help maintain commitment and belief in the effort to continue in the practice.

Tacey and other Jungian writers such as Robert Johnson are saying that our addictions are partially explained as immediate gratification substitutes for blocked creativity which includes the loss of joyful experience that comes with the absence of living spirituality (Johnson 1973). Gamblers speak of being “in the maze” as they enter the pokies. This experience of “being outside yourself” seems a central motivation for maintaining an addiction. The spiritual ecstatic experience may occur in social work practice and in normal life when one is involved in an intimate, genuine conversation and connects with another or when a group synergy develops in a meeting from everyone feeling connected and putting their differences aside by collectively working on a joint problem³⁰. Afterwards people report feeling extremely positive and this feeling of euphoria or being truly alive appears to be something we desire. The practice of yoga also seems to provide this experience and it can limit, but not necessarily eliminate, the need for the same expression via negative addictions.

³⁰ This has happened to me in some group conferences.

Other benefits from yoga are increased balance and circulation, and emotional and mental help in the form of developing calmness, a clearer mind and increased self-esteem and confidence. This increased bodily awareness and subsequent direct perception of the mind-body connection helps to reveal the stark contradiction of practicing such a positive activity like yoga while mistreating your body and mind through unhealthy addictions. Yet even this awareness doesn't prevent a continuation of the addiction as the positive practice can operate in parallel with a negative addiction. The stages of change model used in addiction recovery helps explain how this is a normal phase of the journey out of craving or addiction (Barber 1995). The continued practice of yoga is reported to create a resilience in the practitioner that enables them to persevere in the face of set-backs and adversity.³¹

Yoga is also a practice that is complementary to the widespread twelve step programs which include reference to meditation and spiritual practices and can deepen the spiritual aspect of recovery when the student begins to perceive the asana practice as "prayer in motion" (Stukin 2002). Finally yoga has been found to "dampen dopamine activity in the basal ganglia" which it is claimed helps to inhibit cravings and negative emotional states that trigger drug use (Stukin 2002 p. 3).

The Yoga Teaching Experience in the Addiction Field

Teaching Yoga in this setting may seem like a simple task, but the teacher faces considerable challenges if the class is to be effective. In yoga therapy the emphasis is not on achieving complex asanas or bodily postures. This does not mean the yoga is any different from private tuition classes. As most teachers know, it is often harder to teach beginners yoga in some situations than teach more challenging classes. Asanas have to be adjusted and broken down into very simpler steps and achievement must be obtainable for the students to gain maximum benefit from the class.

³¹ This was reported in the single interviews with Yoga teachers and in my own experience.

Initially my experience has been that there is the general negative energy from participants that pervades these settings. Other writers report some initial resistance from participants when yoga classes were introduced (Calajoe 1986). Most people are feeling very sick at some level and there can be ongoing conflicts occurring within the participant group and/or between the residents and the staff. There is usually a general lethargy and reluctance to be the first to show any enthusiasm, although there can be a few very eager exceptions. Most participants need lots of support and encouragement to “give it a try”. By contrast, at the end of the class, many participants will express very positive responses to the experience and want the class back there tomorrow. But the initial presentation of the potential participants can be a daunting experience for the teacher to face and it requires considerable preparation by the yoga teacher and demonstrated support from the staff of the agency.

The physical nature of the practice tends to obscure the impact of the practice, which operates at many levels. For example, I have found that the bodywork in yoga can make it easier for students to touch upon parts of their bodies where there is a bodily connection to an emotional blockage. This experience can lead the person to cry in class, expressing the awareness that they have touched upon some inner feelings that have been repressed in the body armour. It is not unusual for participants to simply leave during a class, for a range of reasons, although this rarely occurs in normal yoga teaching settings³². These events can be extremely challenging for teachers. While yoga is one way in which the body is included as a therapeutic tool in these settings not much attention has been paid to the therapeutic implications of body work in these settings.

³² In ‘normal’ settings people usually come prepared. There are exceptions such as needing to go to the toilet or students in Bikram yoga settings, where heat is applied needing to leave the heated room.

Teach Thyself First

Yoga practice also challenges the teacher to examine his or her own cravings or addiction. In yoga and many therapeutic systems it is the *sine qua non* that the teacher is primarily working on him or herself and must have been through and overcome the problems before they can teach others. To quote from a yoga teacher and therapist, Charles Bates, in his book *Ransoming The Mind*,

“My conviction is that success in dealing with the participant can only be born of one’s own transformation. Any therapeutic progress experienced by a therapist is derived from the insight established out of who the therapist has become as a result of self-study. The commitment of continual self-knowledge is essential for the therapist. It is this commitment that brings an excitement to the relationship of therapist and client” (Bates 1986 p. 72).

This thesis is in part a recording of my own journey to overcome my own cravings through deepening my yoga practice. The benefits of yoga are only seen after it has been practiced for a considerable time period with a competent and reliable teacher. As one observer has remarked on the Western Yoga scene,

“As practiced by most persons in the West, yoga does not (usually) involve relocation to distant ashrams. Rather within a cycle of daily and yearly activity, it sets aside time for a disciplined practice that enable one to endure external travail whilst experiencing less inner turmoil” (Lafayette 1999 p. 10).

Positive Addictions

One successful strategy in fighting a negative addiction is to gradually replace it with a positive addiction such as yoga and meditation. William Glasser claims that people with positive addictions lead better lives than those people without any addictions at all (Glasser 1976). This is because positive addictions like meditation and running increase your mental strength without

dominating lives. However, people harm themselves by overdoing extremely positive activities to the point where these activities do dominate their lives. In yoga many students experience a stage of “yoga class addiction” where the primary focus for life is daily attendance at yoga classes. To remain ‘stuck’ in this mode of practice is regarded as unfortunate, but perhaps also a necessary stage for some students. Over time it is hoped that even the positive addiction becomes not something you crave or are dependent on for happiness, but treat as valuable and, through personal and creative practice, yoga become a part of who you are.

To illustrate the true meaning of positive addiction Glasser provides the example of the alcoholic monk who began chanting to overcome his addiction. The monk indicated that he sometimes hated chanting daily but he knew that if he didn’t do it he would feel even worse. He states in contrast to the negative addictions where people feel good about something that is doing them harm, positive addictions don’t necessarily make you feel good but they do you good. He lists six criteria before an activity can be considered a positive addiction. It must be non-competitive, something that you choose to do, for one hour per day, preferably alone, or capable of being done alone, of value to you, where you can subjectively experience your improvement without aiming for this goal and involving no criticism by yourself (Glasser 1976).

Over time, the compulsive nature of the positive activity can decline. Then it becomes more like part of your daily routine just like eating or brushing your teeth. In yoga there are a large variety of activities that can form part of this daily routine such as meditation, *asana*, *pranayama* and chanting. This enables the person to continue some form of daily practice despite being ill or having physical injuries, something a repetitive and strenuous activity like running cannot offer.

In my opinion, it requires as many years for a person to really embrace a positive addiction as it took to become firmly entrenched into a negative lifestyle. In De Paul House detoxification centre, where I taught yoga, agency

policy stipulated that ex-addicts, seeking to be employed as residential workers in the unit, must remain clean for a minimum of two years. In the recovery stage, most people experience periods of relapse into the older lifestyle and habits and gradually these periods become less over time.

Yoga as a Positive 'Addiction'

Glasser's theory of positive addictions has its parallel in yoga theory where it is recommended that daily practice of a positive bodily discipline is the way to overcome addictions to negative habits that will gradually fall away. The substitution of alternative substances in medical treatment and alternative activities in complementary therapies like yoga and in twelve step programs is a well-documented approach to tackling addictions.

Yoga can be seen as a 'positive' addiction that replaces a negative one. Phoebe with a prior heroin addiction "clung" to her ashram, practice and yogic lifestyle for many years before being able to take a more relaxed but dedicated approach to her practice. A practitioner in focus group 1 noted:

"Addictive personalities tend to find things they can become addicted to as the "sensation" is the same. If I would do two yoga classes a day or yoga intensives and love it because I was habituating into the sensation. Or I would do one Vipassana course after another and roll one into the other because I knew that on day 9 or 10 I would be in this amazing space. But I was still addicted to that particular space or sensation.... However I can distance myself a little bit from it and know that it won't last forever so I'm not always seeking it. I like to think that is a positive addiction rather than a negative experience"

Other senior yoga teachers believe a healthy yoga addiction is better than other addictions but warn that there needs to be deepening of the practice beyond the immediate sensational rewards (Morton 2001). Certainly, in some individuals, addictions seem to require the environmental replacement of an equally powerful set of tools and habits.

Self Deception and Positive ‘Addictions’

A person can have both simultaneously positive and negative addictions, committed to a positive practice while remaining in the contemplation stage in relation to a negative addiction. The stages of change proposes that people in recovery proceed through a series of stages from precontemplation, contemplation, preparation to change, action, maintenance to termination of recovery (Barber 1995). With the exception of the first and last phases of change, there is usually a struggle going on within the person in recovery between giving into the negative habit and pursuing an alternative direction or action. Keane claims this leads to a form of self-deception or bad faith involving chaos, despair, inner conflict and alienation from reality that “makes the person a perfect candidate for projects of self improvement” because the deception is conscious and despised (Keane 2002 p. 71-72). She uses a pertinent example of a diet pill popping, yoga teacher who is high on speed and yet successfully teaching students how to relax.

While this behaviour may appear contradictory, I prefer to acknowledge its reality, as indicating that the individual is working gradually on their life issues. There needs to be a recognition of the dark or shadow aspect of the personality and the requirement to embrace this reality if we are to become whole. After integration of the personal shadow, there is no perfection available. Even the most experienced yoga teachers had their failings as anyone may witness from reading biographies and books on the leading teachers. Some had a weakness for sweets that remained with them throughout their lives, just as many yoga teachers consciously choose to remain perfectly happy caffeine addicted coffee drinkers, regardless of the known impact on their physiology.

Models of Addiction

In table one below is outlined a broad classification of models from the point of view of different perspectives on addiction, the positive and negative aspects of each model and how the yoga approach can relate to each model.

Table 1
Perspectives on Addiction

Model Description	Assumptions	Positives	Negatives	Relationship to Yoga
Moral or Ethical	Sign of Weakness in Individual and moral decay in society, sinfulness, pathetic behaviour	Addiction does tend to limit potential and free choice	Negative labeling. Ignores multifactor causes, punitive solutions	<i>Yama, Niyama</i> in Yoga are ethical restraints and observances- cravings are an obstacle to development
Disease	Compulsive, powerless over source of addiction	Removes the ethical judgment, sufferers of a disease, 12 step program works on this assumption	You are never out of recovery status, progressive illness model not supported by empirical research	Yoga recognizes higher power and value of spiritual practices.
Psychoanalytic	Unconscious mind dominates conscious mind- addiction covers over deeper issues such as depression	Encourages development of mature ego mechanisms of defence in dealing with drives and cravings.	Perceive addicts as untreatable and lacking in insight. Treatment is long term and costly	Yoga also aims to develop strong ego before dissolving via meditation
Behavioural	Addiction is maladaptive overt behaviour capable of being changed via reinforcement and aversion techniques	Focused, short-term, time limited treatment with some positive empirical results	Underlying problems can go untreated, resulting in symptom Substitution, less participant appeal for this treatment rarely used except on lower class clients who have no alternative	Yoga involves repetition and regular practice which is a reinforcement strategy. Also replacement of negative with positive habits
Social Learning	Modeling and creating opportunities for learning improves self-efficacy, and	Recognizes the role of cognitive processes in affecting perceptions, expectations and	Limited to social and psychological factors, needs a commitment to re-education	Yoga teacher as role model, daily classes and community of practitioners all provide learning

	belief in recovery, improves expectations of better outcomes and relapse management	behaviour		opportunities.
Family Systems	Patterns of relationship can contribute to addiction and affect recovery.	Addresses boundary issues in relationships, reduces negative impacts of other relationship factors such as co-dependency	Families tend to be blamed rather than socio-economic players who can defend their power.	Yoga lifestyle should improve relationships, families can also receive yoga. (see Annalisa Cunningham in Yoga programs chapter. Yoga a complimentary therapy to family counselling)
Socio-Cultural	Gender, demographic, race, class, and subcultures all linked to levels of addiction, most addicts are male and marginalized	Functions of addiction in society, impact of addictive society, loss of rituals and roots, multi-layered intervention targets, focus on practical help	Tends to emphasize macro-factors, theoretical, little relevance for direct services, some social forces cannot be impacted upon by human services such as employment levels or housing availability	Yoga can critique our mindless activities, normal social mores need to be challenged by yoga lifestyle, yoga community can provide belonging and other tangible resources
Peer Educational	Empower ex-addicts, more effective in influencing current addicts, messages are more effective and network support is available	Reduces social isolation and provides new avenues of achievement for ex-addicts	Depends on finding suitable ex-addicts, quality assurance needed in case ex-addict becomes an addict again, or harms addicts	Yoga taught in classes, in peer environment with potential for ex-addicts to become teachers
Harm Reduction	Focused on reducing the risks associated with addiction and recovery-keeping people alive until they decide to address their addiction	Focus on health and Well being of addict and maintaining engagement, and working according to the stage of change the person in at.	Public support may not hold up for strategy that does not tackle addiction levels but only the health of addicts, what about stimulating change?	Yoga is taught to active addicts to keep them well-may lead to a positive addiction stage
Health Promotion	A focus on helping people increase control over their health through information empowerment and advocacy	Encourages self actualization and empowerment, challenges negative labeling, community action and major campaigns in public health,	Tends to attract the articulate resourceful people, focus primarily on educational and advocacy strategies, messages can	Yoga is a self-help activity and requires students to take responsibility for their own health working within their limitations

		defends service users' rights.	be ignored by certain sections of population	
Community Development	Community Planning and networking, advocacy and development solves the real issues	Collaborative planning improves service coordination and delivery	Elites and power brokers tend to dominate and ensure the power status quo is maintained and preferred changes are the only initiatives funded	Karma Yoga Network to forge links between yoga community and human services such as with Inside Yoga program in California.USA
Psychological Resilience	Identifying Risk and Protective Factors and addressing with strategies	Strength based assessment provides comprehensive intervention	Participant may resist intrusive assessment process, not much use when few protective factors are present	Yoga can be a strength focused resilience factor in an addicts life
Holistic-Harm Minimization	As well as harm minimization above, proves a range of complimentary therapies for recovery	Recognition of the diverse ways in which people recover using a range of approaches and combinations	Additional costs and complimentary therapies have little empirical support	Yoga is a complimentary therapy of choice and acknowledges need for holistic intervention
Pharmacological	Focus on replacement of particular substances and medical supervision and treatment of addictions with controlled replacement or prescribed substances	Required to manage withdrawal and used to maintain people addicted to highly addictive substances like heroin. Helps to enable addicts to address social issues	Side effects and dependency on substitute product for long term. Use of pain killers can make yoga dangerous for the addict.	Yoga keeps a person healthy while undergoing treatment.

What I derive from this table is that yoga as a holistic approach can relate to elements in each of the main approaches to addiction and, as a complementary preventative and treatment strategy, yoga is consistent with harm minimization principles.

The Body in Addiction Treatment and Body Therapy

For most of its history, social work has ignored the body as a location for intervention. In recent times, with the development of feminism and body therapies, there has been a greater interest in the use of the body as a legitimate source of knowledge and action (Tangenburg 2002). Wendy

Seymour in her study of spinal injury patients develops the concept of embodiment meaning the lived body and states that:

“Human beings are embodied social agents. They do not simply have bodies. They are bodies and human beings are actively involved in the development of their bodies over their lifecycle” (Seymour 1998 p. 10).

Seymour locates her study between the Michel Foucault’s claim that the body is a product of discourse and the body as a project to be worked on “a site of multiple projects, and highly reconstructable” (Seymour 1998 p. 6).

When people are asked why they attend a yoga class, physical issues with their bodies are one of the key motivations for participation. Using Seymour’s terms, yoga is really a form of “re-embodiment, a project to be worked on, through our frail, unreliable, inefficient, leaking, vulnerable body” (Seymour 1998 p. 6). Yoga is one way in which the body can be included in social work’s potential new focus on the body as a site of insight, healing and transformation and a vehicle of learning new skills.

The above models or perspectives on addiction tend to ignore the body as a significant factor in addiction. The professions, including social work, have viewed the body as an obstacle to treatment. In this view, the body tends to work on the mind of the addict to reinforce the problem. It reflects a perspective, deeply held in the history of western thought and in Christian theology, that the body is an enemy to be subjugated. Yoga also has made assumptions about the need to discipline the body to bring it in line with the higher energies of the mind and soul. Today, there is greater recognition that the body’s knowledge is equally valid to the mind’s and sometimes more valid.

There has been a rediscovery of the body in social work as holistic intervention strategies have become more accepted in the field (Tangenberg 2002). Yoga is also closely aligned to the emergent body therapy field whose focus is on using the body as a tool of understanding and awareness of issues in psychotherapy. Body therapy is relevant to trauma and general

counseling.³³ The focus in yoga on the body as a vehicle for learning about the self and overcoming limitations is central to its technology.

Within the addiction service area, yoga can remind the addict that their body is in fact the most marvelous chemical factory, which, if allowed to become healthy, will deliver feelings of health and well being and even bliss. The use of yoga in social work is one way in which the body can be recognized and utilized in recovery from addiction. But yoga must be adapted to the functions of social work and the bodily needs of the clients.

In the same article, Tangenberg refers to the work of Foucault on disciplinary power and its impact on the body (Tangenberg 2002). Western mainstream advertising in yoga journals can hold out, as the goal for female yoga students, a petite “yoga babe” type body, which becomes the achievement norm.³⁴ These images and bodily narratives can be just as powerful and oppressive to clients as traditional forms of treatment. The yoga teacher needs to be aware that clients are very sensitive to bodily image and adapt the yoga to the diverse range of body types taking account of the range of physical limitations, injuries and disabilities present in the population. For example, the yoga teacher may unconsciously focus on those class members that are more flexible and capable of greater physical achievement and hold this out as the objective of the work, when yoga is primarily about improving focus and awareness, via the practices taught. Yoga teachers need to be honest with addicts and be clear that the physical practice, while very beneficial for health, is equally a holistic vehicle for training the mind and the body.

Twelve Step Programs, Practical Spirituality and Implications for Yoga Programs

In talking to addicts and spending time observing the addiction recovery field of service, I am impressed by the practical value of the various 12-step

³³ See *Psychotherapy in Australia* Volume 8 Number 2 February 2002 which is wholly devoted to Body Therapy

³⁴ I have used the female example here but the trim, tightly muscled male counterpart exists as well.

programs such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA), Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), Alanon, etc. I have personally attended numerous AA and NA meetings over many years as an observer. For all the limitations of the disease model, you find in these meetings and beyond, via the peer group leadership and mentoring, the possibility for the addict of building positive informal helping relationships, the development of social and coping skills, and a collective experience or sense of belonging to a spiritual movement and community. Jane Piazza in *Working Together in Troubled Times* (Piazza 1997), which looks at community based therapies emphasizes the importance of developing community and building self esteem through building relationships between the professional programs, the self help support groups and the informal and formal community networks.

In her critique of the twelve step and self help movements, Keane makes the important qualification that her criticism acknowledges the significant benefits that these movements have brought many people and the often pragmatic and hybrid approach taken in the practical implementation of the theoretical ideas that she is criticizing in her book "*What's Wrong with Addiction?*" (Keane 2002).

Similarly, while yoga is sometimes imagined as a solitary activity, the reality is that progress in yoga thrives upon input from yoga teachers, and the communities of yoga practitioners that surround yoga schools, teachers and ashrams. This statement does not imply that yoga cannot be practiced alone nor, that in certain periods, it is in fact beneficial for a yoga practitioner to study alone. But solo practice is a conscious choice that is time limited with certain aims to achieve and reviewable at any stage if progress is slowed. Eventually the practitioner returns to a community where the self-help approach is supported by contributions from all. If yoga is to be a realistic complimentary therapy, then it must adopt the positive peer support and mentoring aspect, similar to that provided by twelve-step programs.

Yoga and Addiction

In yoga, the development of consciousness is the crucial ingredient in the overcoming of an obstacle like an addiction. Yoga states that we have this inherent capacity to experience higher consciousness but that our normal minds are in a state of distraction, where we identify with the images in our minds as if they are our total minds. A contemporary transpersonal view of the same phenomena is argued by Ken Wilber in his theory of a spectrum of consciousness, which is embraced by his comprehensive four quadrants model of human knowledge in which the upper left-hand quadrant is defined as the interior intentional domain of knowledge. As Roger Walsh notes in a succinct precise of Wilber's writings,

“Transpersonal experiences are simply the higher development stages of the upper left-hand quadrant.” (Walsh 1998 p. 40)

One of the potential benefits of Yoga is the experience of ecstasy or bliss as a natural condition of the experience of this “higher faculty”. Cornelius Johns states,

“It is a powerful revelation to know that all peace, bliss and pleasure is the natural condition of our consciousness and that the source of its opposite, distress is the distraction and disturbance in the mind”. (Johns 1992 p. 2)

The aim in yoga is for the mind to become the “servant” of this higher faculty, which develops over time, with regular meditation practice. Yoga teaches the practitioner that we have this ability to witness our own thinking processes and gain access to a higher wisdom faculty whether that is thought of as coming from above or within the person. This creates a capacity over time to sense what in yoga is regarded as one's true self, the “witness” or “seer” from the craving or aversion sensations of the mind and to experience all addiction as just that -a sensation of the mind that can either be reinforced by feeding or starved and gradually eliminated by simple observation and mindfulness in continuous, twice daily, short meditation practice of 20-30 minutes duration.

One addict describes the “powerful desire that resides within and helps define the human spirit” and that addiction “is a failed substitute for the deep communion with nature that modern civilization denies most of us” (Fred 2001 p.64). He writes “the one thing we seek with insatiable desire is to forget ourselves to do something without knowing how or why. This would not be trance or murky or evasive projection but the keenest wakefulness” (Fred 2001 p. 64).

The famous yoga teacher of Rishikesh India Sri Swami Sivananda writes of *karma* yoga, the yoga of selfless action, as the preliminary requirement before one can really experience this blissful state. He notes that the *Bhagavad-Gita* points out that the yoga of action is better than the yoga of renunciation. Our actions should be done without thought of reward. It is in completing our duties with this emphasis on right actions, without reward, that one gains real spiritual wisdom. The important point here, for people suffering from addictions, is that we lose ourselves completely in our work or actions when we approach work with this level of dedication and attention to the process and not the outcome and, in doing so, we begin to experience bliss. Sivananda speaks of karma yoga “preparing the ground with love, understanding and service” for other forms of yoga³⁵ (Sivananda 1985 p. 35).

Yoga teaches that we are the results largely of our thoughts and actions. As a social worker, I am also profoundly aware of how much the material conditions of our clients’ lives determines their thoughts and actions. This thesis is a search for a way to marry these seemingly opposed perspectives. To achieve this marriage, I must address both viewpoints in my search for meaningful action in this service delivery area of practice. To improve lives, as a yoga teacher, I stress the need to take hold of the one thing we can reasonably expect to change, which is ourselves. Yoga states that we must avoid harmful thoughts and actions such as lying, stealing, harmful sexual misconduct and wanting to take hold of other peoples possessions and even

³⁵ Father Vyn Bailey made the same point to me when he advised me to simply focus on building my yoga practice and not worry about outcomes or lifestyle issues.

being possessive of what we own. These are the only absolute values in yoga for all circumstances because these actions retard our progress in yoga. As any action can have potential harmful outcomes as well as good ones, sometimes we need to investigate our actions carefully³⁶. The observances in yoga are cleanliness, contentment, self-discipline, personal study and surrender or devotion to a higher being or God. All these practical lifestyle behaviours and actions have been established as means and objectives and proven over centuries to be effective in developing a lifestyle conducive to yoga practice.

For example, the third element of *kriya* yoga and the fifth element of the observances is devotion or surrender to a higher power. While not an absolute requirement in yoga, (because atheism is perfectly consistent with yoga), this practical belief and action has proven effective for many practitioners. In a contemporary context on the same issue, with the 12 step programs, Kissman writes,

“For individuals who feel relatively powerless in controlling addiction, joining with a higher power in order to increase personal power may make more sense than giving up the little power they do possess. Reframing the act of relinquishing to joining reflects the importance of semantic differences in making meaning of the connection between spirituality and empowerment.

Whether individuals view themselves as giving up power or forming a vertical connection with higher authority, a greater awareness of gratitude and humility is the foundation of healing and the basis of many 12 step programs (Rioux 1996) The results can be the personal liberation from the grip of ego-bound emotions as well as sobriety or a reduced use of psychoactive substances to quiet the troubled mind”(Kissman 2002 p. 36).

Yoga places a value on building support through community. In yoga this community tends to build around a teacher or school but increasingly communities will diversify around particular issues or areas of interest. Yoga practitioners tend to be perennial students of yoga and conceivably a community of yoga practitioners could be established around the area of yoga

³⁶ A Christian would add that we also need to learn to forgive ourselves and others for all our mistakes, thoughtlessness and deliberate harmful actions etc.

and addiction. Here my social work perspective is paramount in that resources must be created to provide opportunities for marginalized addicts to access yoga services. This is the intention behind the creation, out of this research, of the karma yoga network-yoga practitioners dedicated to helping others use yoga to overcome addiction through the provision of teaching, retreats, support and training opportunities.

Yoga teaches mindfulness via *asana*, *pranayama* and meditation practice. Being present to what is going on is where real power lies in that all joy, contentment, bliss and freedom can only be found in the present moment. The twelve-step philosophy takes recovery at “one day at a time” and mindfulness teaches that recovery begins by creating the conditions today via practice and detachment.

Yoga is fun and our spiritual health depends upon finding joyfulness in life. As well as achieving specific therapeutic objectives, there is a kind of adult play going on in the use of yoga props and partner work in practice with blankets, walls, belts, chairs, bolsters, hanging ropes, blocks and other pieces of equipment all being used to create enjoyment and pleasure in the Iyengar yoga class. These yoga props also have a primary purpose in helping people achieve the pose and gain the benefits of the *asana*. Metronomes are used in *pranayama* and visualizations in meditation. This fun or pleasure element in practice has parallels with other healing arts such as massage and touch and various forms of adult play in therapy. There is nothing denigrating about acknowledging yoga has a playful as well as serious component to its practice. Other yoga schools or styles reflect different aspects of yoga. For example, *bikram* yoga with its hot room temperatures has been compared to a torture chamber by its own advocates. Yet many people enjoy this sauna like experience. People involved in flowing yoga styles reflect that there are elements of a dance like experience in this approach.

Yoga can also cause excessive and severe pain and even serious injury. Even with correct practice and good intentions, accidents can still happen. Injury can be minimized by practices that prevent injury such as warming-up

exercises, attention to sequencing, promoting attitude of non-competitiveness and body acceptance, avoiding overcrowding in classes, being aware of pre-existing illnesses and injuries and adjusting for them, avoiding certain poses with very overweight or inflexible people, creating variety in practices to avoid repetitive injuries, use of props and adjusting for body type and the instructor taking active steps to protect overzealous students from injuring themselves- the latter accounting for most insurance claims. With people in recovery from drug or alcohol addiction, the prescribing of methadone and other pain suppressants provides an added risk factor, as bodily pain is our major precautionary weapon against overworking in poses. For all these reasons, it is best to keep asana practice focused on simple, easy to achieve poses and use props such as chairs, etc, so that people can achieve the pose within their current capacity with minimal injury risk (Krucoff 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter examined the links between the current theoretical perspectives on addiction and the yoga model and practice. A broad definition of addiction was proposed that focused on the subjective harm experienced by the person and loss of self-agency as the crucial determining factor. One potential explanation for yoga's benefit in addiction is to view it as a form of positive practice. When an addict embraces yoga a period of conflict takes place where the positive and negative addictions play out in a person's life. If the person is persistent with practice, eventually the negative addictions drop away and gradually the positive addictive approach is minimized.

Yoga is conceived as consistent with harm minimization philosophy and also has complimentary aspects to other models of addiction. Its use of the body as a vehicle for transformation along with the mind was highlighted alongside similar trends in body therapy and other social work interventions. The risks in potential injuries to clients from yoga and forcing unrealistic bodily expectations on clients and lack of understanding of withdrawal effects on participant behaviour were explored.

Chapter 5 Yoga and Transformation

This chapter examines the meaning of transformation in yoga. My research found that all sources, including the literature, emphasized the concept of *kriya* yoga as the mechanism by which an addiction is tackled. *Kriya* yoga means the yoga of action and consists of three elements-regular practice, reflection or self study, where the student embraces the subject and builds upon what is taught and makes it their own, and finally faith in the chosen path. Assumed within this definition, is the role of the yoga teacher and community for without these factors, it would be very unlikely that students would develop in their yoga practice. Yoga relies upon a pedagogical relationship between the students and teacher and the gradual adoption of a new component of their identity by the student as a yoga practitioner. Yoga has an array of techniques to assist in transformation but asana or bodily postures remains the preferred mechanism in the west and this emphasis distinguishes yoga from other spiritual approaches. Yoga demands a significant commitment and discipline from the student-addict in recovery but through this a resilience and motivation to change is forged. The contradictions of maintaining negative habits are more exposed as the body becomes more highly sensitized and “turned off” by negative actions and there is a gradual falling away of negative addictions over time. However this process may take many years or may never happen.

In this chapter I look at what my research found in how yoga can contribute to a non-addictive lifestyle. Drawing upon my own experience, the single interviews with a number of yoga teachers, the two focus group discussions and the literature on yoga and yoga history, I draw some conclusions about the essential elements in the use of yoga as a transformational tool.

Definitions and links between Kriya, Hatha and Astanga Yoga

In this section I outline key definitions of yoga and explore the literature on yoga and transformation. The focus groups and interviews highlighted the importance of kriya yoga or the three essential elements of yoga which was first stated in the classical literature by Patanjali in the beginning of Book 2 of the yoga sutras.(Feuerstein 1989)

Yoga is a vast subject with many alternative methods and approaches³⁷. Before examining this subject, I need to define the key concepts of hatha yoga, kriya yoga and astanga yoga. Yoga is a set of spiritual disciplines that aims to transform individual practitioners.

Kriya Yoga or the yoga of action consists of three elements. *Tapas* requires the practitioner to develop a spiritual discipline from the array of suggested practices (called astanga yoga or eight limbs) or their own practice that they love, such as writing. Patanjali does not specify what this practice should be, although he does make very specific suggestions on what practices should be followed. The quality that should be brought to this practice is fire or heat, meaning effort, determination and will power, qualities that people experiencing an addiction tend to lack. This is the meaning of *tapas*.

The second ingredient is *svadhyaha* which historically referred to the repetition aloud or chanting of sacred scripture. Bailey asserts that the true intention of *svadhyaha* is “ I myself get involved in the practice. I do my homework, perhaps working harder than the teachers do. Personal Study expresses the concept better.” (Bailey 1997, p. 52)

³⁷ For example, the most common form of yoga practiced in India is the Yoga of word, or mantra yoga-the repetition of sacred words as a form of prayer. This is the oldest form of yoga dating back to the Vedas and other ancient scriptures. These scriptures are embedded in ancient narrative stories or myths which also have significant spiritual importance in yoga. I practice the Christian meditation method of John Main which is mantra based and derivative from Christian scripture. Once again yoga is not prescriptive of any religious scripture and any words of significant meaning for the yoga practitioner can be used for the same effect.

The third element is *isvara-pranidhanini* which means to have faith in the practice or surrender to the path chosen (which can include the concept of devotion to a higher power or God). These three elements should be contained in the physical practice of *hatha* yoga. I bring determination and effort to the pose, pay attention through self observation, and effortlessly surrender to the pose.

Hatha yoga or forceful yoga makes special use of the body as a vehicle of self-discipline and transformation and is the preferred path of most yoga practitioners and teachers in the West. It includes the eight limbs of Yoga and is attractive to addicts because of the immediate “feel-good” sensations and health benefits that practitioners report coming from the practice.

There are many different styles of *hatha* yoga. My yoga practice and teaching style is constantly evolving and developing as a teacher and student of yoga. I teach a mixture of the three dominant schools of *hatha* yoga taught in the West, which are Iyengar, Astanga, and Viniyoga. I am also certified in Gita yoga which is a Melbourne-based yoga school. It is modern trend in Yoga teaching for styles to become blended or mixed.

In *The Shambala Encyclopedia of Yoga*, ‘yoga’ is derivative from the root ‘*yuj*’, which means to yoke or harness (Feuerstein 1997). In India, Brother Rudra Dev from Rishikesh, a yoga teacher I trained with in 2001, illustrated the meaning in the way bullocks are “yoked together” to plough the field. In a similar way, he stated, that ‘we must yoke our body and mind to our spirit or higher self, which must ultimately hold the reins’. From the original meaning we get the sense that yoga requires effort, determination and growing commitment on our part to do some work on ourselves.

The most common expression today is that yoga means union of the mind, body and spirit. (The latter is referring to the human experience of our more subtle energy levels or our divine or higher nature). This definition is correct but it doesn’t evoke the same imagery of the root definition and the implication of the effort required by the practitioner.

Hatha yoga is essentially about using the body, our first “tool”, as a vehicle of transformation. It is defined as “forceful” Yoga and the vast body of doctrines and practices geared towards self realization by means of perfecting the body. The body in Yoga is believed to consist of a number of layers. There is little distinction between the mind, body and spirit elements. Hence, *hatha* yoga has always included much more than what western sciences view as the body. At a more esoteric level, the two connecting syllables “Ha” and “tha” refer to the sun or dynamic and moon or reflective energies within the body which need to be balanced or brought to union. The two syllables also link to the passage of the breath through the two nostrils of the nose, which is used in pranayama.

Definitions of Transformation

What is meant by transformation? While the dictionary definition describes the term as meaning “ a complete change for the better”, is this always the case? (Collins 1995) Koval argues that “human spirituality is always concrete and limited” and that “the quality of spirit, religious or not, depends not on the fact of its being but on the concrete social relations it advances” (Koval 1991 p. 4). Coward’s view is that we should remain critical but open to the competing perspectives between the east and the west as to whether human nature is perfectible and the claims by yoga, as a technical substructure of eastern religions, that it is effective at producing this transformation (Coward 2002). In this study I am interested in the capacity and potential of yoga to contribute to slow but gradual long lasting change from addictive patterns that limit a person’s potential to live a more productive life and thereby make a greater contribution to their community. As a social worker and yoga teacher, I view yoga as adding to other interventions, actions and self help strategies to collectively achieve this result over time.

Relevant Aspects of Yoga History

In this section, I link the meaning of *kriya* yoga³⁸ or the yoga of action and *astanga* yoga, which means the eight limbs of yoga. I note the interrelated nature of these definitions and the profound freedom of practice that comes from understanding this point, which was first written about by Georg Feuerstein (Feuerstein 1989).

A recent *hatha* yoga text claims that the classical Indian *hatha* yoga texts are based upon ancient traditions of practice that pre-date the Vedic-Upanishad period of spiritual awakening (Burley 2000, p. 15-39). If that view is correct, then the traditional historical view that the development of *hatha* yoga is a relatively recent phenomenon of the middle ages must be revised. The first *hatha* yoga texts appear in this period, but the *hatha* practices appear to be built upon an ancient foundation.

In the Western world, yoga is most commonly identified with the physical exercise routines (called *asanas* or the assuming of body postures and sun salutations or flowing combinations of *asanas*). This is the most visible form of yoga practice and it clearly differentiates yoga from Buddhist and other meditation practices, for example, which do not significantly attend to the body beyond ensuring a comfortable seated or other position. It is also what attracts most western people to yoga in the first place, as there are immediate benefits to health and well-being attained from the practice of these exercise routines.

Behind these visible practices, there are many other techniques and methods of yoga practice and a philosophical outlook that provides a justification for the practical applications. These other techniques include *pranayama* or breath control, *pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses usually involving relaxation

³⁸ The meaning of Kriya Yoga is taken from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras as described by Georg Feuerstein and not as used in Kundalini Yoga.

techniques, concentration exercises including chanting, meditation, and, finally contemplation, which is more an outcome of the application of concentration and meditation.

Patanjali, in the *Yoga Sūtras*, was the first teacher to systematize the ancient existing practices that were passed on from teacher to pupil. The *yoga sūtras* are the primary reference text for the practice of yoga. Patanjali is most identified with the famous eight limbs of yoga or *astanga* yoga, which describe the methods of yoga capable of transforming a human being. These eight limbs are *yama* or moral restraints, *niyama* or observances, *asana* or body postures, *pranayama* or breath control, *pratyahara* or withdrawal of the senses, *dharana* or concentration, *dhyana* or meditation, and *samadha* or contemplation.

Patanjali recognized the transformative power of the inner limbs of yoga, (that is concentration, meditation and contemplation) in his *sūtras*. His contribution is often referred to as '*raja*' yoga or the royal road because it is considered as superior to the physical or external limbs of yoga.

However, I believe this view ignores the historical context in which the *sūtras* would have developed. The *sūtras* were developed as the threadbare, minimum core of yoga understanding, which were repetitively chanted by yoga practitioners, (before the advent of mass book production). If there was a physical practice taught, this would not have required emphasis in *sūtra* form because of the transmission of this understanding via direct learning and practice. Similarly the *hatha* yoga texts contain only the threadbare elements of physical practice in *sūtra* format as it was assumed that learning of the practices would be via direct transmission from a master teacher to students.

There is little doubt that the limbs of yoga were well known and partially documented by others prior to Patanjali. He adopted, systematized, and incorporated them in his comprehensive and succinct instruction system. Feuerstein argues that Patanjali's primary contribution was to give primacy to '*kriya*' yoga or the yoga of action. Feuerstein argues this view because the

three elements of *kriya* yoga are what make the *sutras* unique. Further, Patanjali places his definition of *kriya* yoga in the beginning of Book 2 where he defines the practices of yoga, and they are repeated in the definition of the *niyamas* or observances. Feuerstein asserts that the *kriya* yoga is not just the preliminary practices required of the beginning student, but in fact is the core teaching of Patanjali.(Feuerstein 1989 p. 6-17)

This is not simply an academic point. If Feuerstein is correct in his interpretation, then it expands the definition of yoga practice beyond the eight limbs to allow for other disciplines that may better suit particular individuals. The eight limbs are still a significant element of Yoga, but not the whole story. For example, a person may choose writing, martial arts or tai chi as his discipline and never practice a single asana. This approach would be consistent with Feuerstein's view of Patanjali and more consistent with the broader understanding of yoga in India where *karma* yoga (the yoga of selfless action), *jnana* yoga (the yoga of knowledge), and *bhakti* yoga (the yoga of devotion) are considered essential elements in yoga practice.

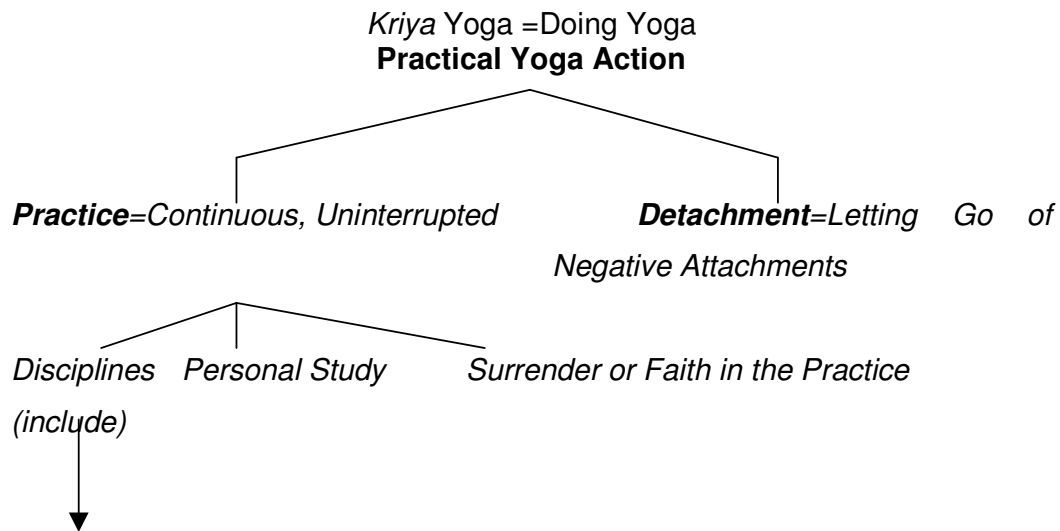
Contrary to the western preconceptions, very few Indians actually practice *hatha* yoga. The most popular yoga practice in India is *bhakti* yoga. Despite this broader view of yoga, it is important to emphasize that *astanga* yoga or the eight limbs, now considered to be a part of *kriya* yoga, is still the preferred path for many western yoga practitioners. Most yoga teachers will continue to use *asana* as the primary tool of education and gradually introduce their students to the broader concepts and more advanced practices. The classic *hatha* yoga texts consider *hatha* yoga and *raja* yoga to be identical. The *hatha* yoga texts actually prescribe practices for the eight limbs. B.K.S. Iyengar writes that *hatha* and *raja* or classical Yoga are the same in that both are concerned with the practice of the 8 limbs or *astanga* yoga as defined by Patanjali in the yoga *sutras* (Iyengar 1976).

Figure 5, shows how I interpret what Feuerstein has discovered in his interpretation of Patanjali's yoga *sutras* on the subject of the relationship

between *hatha*, *astanga* and *kriya* yoga (meaning the yoga of action) all have overlapping meanings. These are the:

- 8-fold path of *astanga* yoga, which are the disciplines,
- Personal study element which refers to the student actually doing his own work, and
- Surrender or the bhakti element, which means that I trust in the path or dharma and/or surrender to our understanding of our higher power or God (if I have this belief system or point of view).

- Figure 5



Patanjali's 8 limbs or Astanga yoga

1 Yama (Ethical Avoidances)

- Non-Harming
- Truthfulness
- Non-stealing
- Sexual Restraint
- Non-possessiveness

2 Niyama(Observances)

- Cleanliness
- Contentedness
- Self-discipline
- Personal Study
- Surrender

3 Asana (Body Postures)

4 Pranayama (Breathing Control)

- 5 *Pratyahara (Retreat From or Withdrawal of the Senses)*
- 6 *Dharana(Concentration or Focus on a Single Object)*
- 7 *Dhyana (Meditation)*
- 8 *Samadhi (Contemplation)*

The Yoga Teacher-Student Relationship

The yoga paradigm is initiatory, pedagogical and experiential. It is taught from teacher to pupil and the teacher remains a student of yoga in order to refresh her teaching. The teacher must experience the benefits and challenges in their own life. In Yoga, the teacher must teach with the authority of one who has practiced the art and understands the science of yoga practice. For example, a teacher should have experienced how assuming a posture that is steady and comfortable allows the body to surrender to the pose. This helps create an experience of effortlessness in the action of the pose that allows the practitioner to experience serenity in posture. This is the experience in bodily form of the unity of opposites, where the effort becomes effortlessness³⁹, and of being self-reliant and yet recognizing our total dependence on others. This unity of opposites is also reflected in how yoga requires the student to be self taught through self study and accept direction from more experienced practitioners, and by being both a warrior in certain poses and just as happy in the humility of the pose of the sleeping child⁴⁰. The yoga teacher's task is to communicate this knowledge through instruction, demonstration and adjustment and correction of students' efforts in the poses.

Yoga and Transformation:-Practitioners' Views

In the addiction recovery and corrections fields, Yoga teachers realize they have to adjust their teaching approaches. As my senior Iyengar teacher, Mark Gibson, explained, the participants are not going to respond to someone barking instructions at them, and pushing them around. They already experience that in residential settings and know how to deflect anyone

³⁹ I acknowledge the views of B.K.S. Iyengar in the comments made in this paragraph of asana practice.

⁴⁰ Warrior and sleeping child are yoga poses.

approaching them in that way. The Yoga teacher has to have patience and communication skills and engage the students more in a dialogue than a dictatorial teaching approach. The students still want a challenge but it needs to be within their capacity. But the first challenge can be just getting their attention.

The Need To Engage Participants

I wish to introduce some practice wisdom or tacit knowledge from the focus groups and dialogic interviews that I conducted as part of this thesis. Here is an extract from focus group one on yoga and transformation. ‘John’ is talking about techniques he uses to engage the young people locked up in a Melbourne maximum security detention centre which leads into the group exploring the fact that yoga is inclusive of this requirement. ‘John’ is using his creativity to engage the young people who are acting out in the residential unit before the yoga class commences. Many practitioners in dialogic interviews reinforced this flexibility of practice in the addiction field. It has also been my experience that the teacher must be prepared to reach out to the students to gain their cooperation and involvement in the practice. Dialogue before, during and after class with adults is the most common strategy. Here the teacher is working with highly challenging young offenders in custodial care. Yoga plays a constructive role in a high security unit by creating an engaging recreational diversion, releasing tension in the residents and giving the residential staff a release from stress built up by residents. This is a legitimate function for recreational pursuits in a security unit and yoga is an excellent tool to achieve a temporary calm.

From the focus group John states;

“Sometimes I get them to ring the bell. I just keep getting them interested in directing their mind away, (from other distractions in the residential unit). Sometimes they are very noisy and destructive. I’ll just put on their rap music and dance with them. Something like that is not a particular modality but it’s directing their energy away from being destructive.”

Is The Mind More Important than the Body?

In the first focus group on yoga and transformation, John created a significant discussion on the role of the physical practice in yoga by stating bluntly that only meditation or mind training and not asana practice will overcome addiction.

“I have not seen anyone get out of addiction using yoga or chi gong (a Chinese form of *asana* practice). I’ve seen lots of so called health masters addicted to many things. (for example, things like gambling or sex) I’ve also seen some serious martial arts practitioners-real assize blokes, who have been practicing for 10 years or so, and their body gets really healthy, and they have a natural tendency to not consume negative things like alcohol because that throws them off balance and their body does not like it. To be healthy or not comes back to the mind and how you accumulate your karmic forces. I’ve also seen people practicing yoga get addicted to things. So the mind is the source of the problem, but its good to use the exercise as a tool”.

‘*Brian*’ disagreed with ‘*John*’ that the exclusive source of the addiction is “in the mind”. As an engineer by training, this yoga teacher viewed the body as a communication system.

“I was taught as an engineer to look at the body as a communication system: the principle system being the central nervous system but also the endocrine system. So, it’s the communication system that unites the body and mind into body mind....So, in my experience its still necessary to work on the physical body because there is a natural influencing tendency with the mind and visa versa”.

Audrey, a kinesiologist with a yoga background, attended the first focus group added the importance of diet in getting the body ready to address addictions issues. In the classic yoga texts, diet including how and what you eat and drink is detailed. One of the major benefits of addicts being in drug detoxification units where yoga teachers present “seeding classes” is the availability of healthy meals and lifestyle for the ten days in which they reside there.

“Diet is important because the body has to be in a good state. A lot of people suffer from candida, which causes a lot of strife mentally, toxicity in the blood and depression. You can usually see it in very dark circles

under their eyes and they just need to participate in a 10-day diet that will kill off that aspect then the immune system can attack it in the blood. So it is good food and yoga to get the endocrine and meridian system flowing properly so that you can arrive easier at a stillness, which connects us with our higher purpose. An addict thinks of himself or herself as an external disconnected person trying to get satisfaction from some external source all the time. What is an addiction really? It's a substitute for what we don't have. When we get to what we do have and get that food for the mind, that stillness and joy, then things drop off. We don't need the rest. When we connect with our sense of purpose. We are a soul and there is a purpose being here, find it, get going, and that kills the pain of emptiness and needing to get out of this horrible mess."

This discussion was a "hot point" within the first focus group dealing with yoga and transformation. There was a healthy exchange of views within the yoga teachers and others present around this question of mind over body. In my experience, the physical practice of yoga is more accepted and a better preparation for people in recovery than mind training. The physical practice can lead towards a guided meditation when the participants have developed a focused mind through the asana practice.

Kriya Yoga In Action

In the dialogic interviews, videotaped with two senior and experienced yoga teachers from different schools, both teachers independently emphasized *kriya* yoga as the primary contribution yoga can make to the addiction field. In their view, it didn't matter whether the practitioner chooses meditation or physical yoga exercises, or a combination of both or some other chosen discipline. What was required for transformation were the three elements of *kriya* yoga, the effort and dedication, personal study and the faith to persevere daily in their chosen discipline.

In the focus group, Mary reported significant transformative results from addicts attending a drug counseling agency for two physical yoga sessions per week. One of the results of a yoga practice is the gradual development of purification. *Tapas*, the first element in *kriya* yoga refers to the yoga developing a blazing desire to improve via some form of self discipline or activity. In relation to *asana* practice as a preferred self-discipline, the

Gheranda Samhita, one of the classic Indian texts states, “like an unbaked earthen pot thrown into water, the body is soon decayed in this world. Bake it hard in the fire of training in order to strengthen and purify the body” (Gherandra Samihita 1914 p. 2). The results of the practice are gradual, but ‘Mary’, in focus group 1, pointed to the following indicators of transformation or purification in her students. The students are mostly on methadone and coming off prescription drugs and /or alcohol addiction.

“They’re starting to do their own practice as well, so they’re starting to feel better: their posture and confidence. Basically their bodies are not in so much pain. And things like overcoming obstacles. When they come in (for the first time) I show them down-faced dog pose, and they say they’ll never be able to do that-some time later, they’re holding it for five minutes. It seems that for the students who are committed to the two classes per week, the rest of their lives start to fall into place. They get jobs and better housing. They get on top of the other issues in their lives”

The yoga teacher was at pains to stress the combined impact on her clients of the holistic intervention of the agency. Davies argues that we should not overestimate the significance of these changes-they are only a part of the process of addiction recovery (Davies 1985 p. 49). They may be reversible as in the experience of relapse in recovery. They reflect the determination of these yoga students to change not necessarily the impact of the yoga teacher or indeed of yoga itself. Nevertheless, research confirms that “personal style and professional skill of the worker are major components in goal achievement” (Davies 1985 p. 49). Those who kept up their practice started to report very positive changes in other areas of their every day lives. They may have learnt an important lesson via the asana practice. Positive results in successful asana practice come from gradual committed practice. They could apply this in other areas of their lives. My own experience also confirms this finding. It is only when I allow time for self and diligently practice my yoga and meditation daily that I can have any hope in dealing with stress, achieving goals and addressing cravings.

Research Results

So, here I have found the first research result that meets Ken Wilber's requirement for sound transpersonal knowledge and Dick's requirement for validity in action research (Dick 2000 p. 13-14). My own practice, the focus groups, the dialogic interviews and the modern interpretations in the yoga literature on transformation all place the crucial requirement on *kriya* yoga. All sources point to gradual transformation in the lives of people suffering from addictions coming about through sustained practice of a discipline or activity, personal study and reflection to make it your own, and maintaining faith and devotion to their chosen approach. You can choose the yoga disciplines which are varied and adaptable, use another documented path like the 12-step recovery system or a combination, or develop a discipline or activity of your own.

The Challenge of Regular Practice

In all yoga schools there is a requirement for regular practice. Yoga and meditation "generously practiced without interruption for a long time becomes firmly grounded" to quote from Vyn Bailey's interpretation of patanjali No 14 Book One. The three criteria for practice ("generous" which Bailey carefully explains is derived from two words that mean "making your self at home in yoga " and "enjoying your practice by ensuring it is not a tedious, repetitious grind", "without interruption" and "for a long time" imply regular and punctual attendance to practice. (Bailey 1997 p. 44-45)

My experience is that you can always find an excuse not to practice, even something you enjoy. When I met Vyn Bailey, a Catholic priest who taught yoga meditation, he had already retired from teaching at St Mary's Towers, Douglas Park, just out of Sydney NSW Australia. He made time to see me, after I wrote to him about my interest in meeting him. His one piece of advice to me was to get my daily spiritual practices happening and the troublesome lifestyle issues I was seeking his advice on would sort themselves out. He

says exactly the same in his book when he interprets Patanjali's Yoga Sutra No 13 Book One which states, "Stilling the distractions of the mind is achieved by continued practice coupled with detachment." Bailey says, "make that exercise routine, those yoga asanas, that meditation, part of the daily round and give it top priority". "Set a definite time for it each day and keep to it. Regularity and punctuality are the operative words"(Bailey 1997, p. 40).

Reflecting on his words many years later, I believe he was not implying, as I originally thought, that all my life's problems about future direction would get sorted out by developing my yoga disciplines. He was clearly advising me that the practice required for transformation of the mind is so significant that it should remain your primary focus, not the results of your practice. In the next Sutra, Bailey interprets Patanjali's definition of effective practice as "effort to achieve steadiness there"(Bailey 1997, p. 43). By the time we have become adults, our daily habits are ingrained in us and any real transformation requires considerable effort on our part. Many of our habits are beyond our conscious perception, until these new disciplines help to bring these habits to our attention. They are still just as difficult to overcome, but at least we are now aware of them and their deleterious impact on us. It will take many of us years to overcome these ingrained habits, but the spiritual practices are working on us to help us question them on a daily basis. Gradually some negative habits may begin to fall away. They may reoccur for a time, during relapse periods, but if we keep up the yogic disciplines daily, we have a chance to address them. Bates states " To think and act out of commitment, with emotional intensity, over an extended period of time produces transformation. The way in is the way out. This is because the way of action governs human existence (Bates 1986 p. 99).

Critics of my inclusion of yoga in social work could argue that the dedication level is the primary limitation of the relevance of yoga for the addiction field. In this aspect they are perhaps right. The real benefits only come from regular practice, although any practice is going to assist the person in recovery. Desikachar states "yoga is a gradual process of recovery, maintenance, and improvement. It requires patience and discipline and no small amount of

faith”(Desikachar 1988 p. 128). The level of dedication to achieve transformation is significant but that does not mean it is not appropriate for those clients who really enjoy the practice and find the dedication to continue, no matter how small the numbers involved. Here the value of belonging to a yoga community cannot be underestimated. Also, there are still benefits for others who might take up the practice intermittently and the challenge for the teacher is to create a practice with the student that can fit into the requirements of their lifestyle.

Yoga as a New Identity

This sense of finding a new purpose for living through yoga is exemplified in some yoga teachers’ lives which is reflected in another teacher’s comments from focus group two:

“I started teaching yoga in gymnasiums and come from a corporate background. If someone had told me what meditation or yoga was I would have had no idea. Then I developed a real bad back and as a result I had no choice. I had to get into yoga. Then I had the benefits. I wanted to bridge people’s understanding of what yoga is and give them a practical application...because most people think it’s a bunch of stretches and you try and become more flexible”.

Certainly, these excerpts from the focus groups reflect the broader lack of clarity and misunderstanding in the wider community as to what role the exercises or *asana*, as the primary visible aspect of yoga, play in the transformation process, and how they relate to meditation. It can be seen, from the focus group discussion, that these divergent views are reflected within the yoga community itself and reflect competing views around the value of the physical practices and different views on the role and importance of meditation in yoga.

Personal Reflections

I believe the practitioners’ understanding of yoga changes with experience and practice from being a naïve beginner to a supposedly well informed and experienced teacher. I have found, through this thesis, that my understanding of yoga and transformation has never stopped evolving with my own

experience and research. In my view, the public perception of yoga as a physical practice combining physical exercises including stretching, breathing and relaxation techniques, which can help maintain health and release stress, is legitimate. What is missing from this view is the critical role played by the practitioner's own subjective understanding and yoga practices in their life. To a significant degree, we are what we want to make ourselves to be, given our social and historical circumstances. So the yoga teachers play a very important role in helping their students become identified as yoga practitioners themselves. This is achieved through the teacher inspiring the students and providing a challenging but enjoyable class, so that the students get tangible benefits in health, flexibility and fitness and in identifying with yoga via the teacher.

Yoga provides one way in which an addict can begin to change and create a new element in their recovery "identity". This is an important element in transformation. It wasn't reflected across all research methods, so the identity factor cannot be considered on par with kriya yoga. However I think it plays a considerable role in achieving a regular practice.

The focus groups also mentioned the need for the yoga teacher to create a safe space in which the students can experience transformation. While it is hard to pinpoint what the ingredients are in the creation of a safe space, I think they are similar to what is required in any therapeutic environment. You can speak of the teacher's inspiration, dedication, knowledge and experience, and their dependability and thoroughness.

Is Yoga just Exercise?

The expansion and growth of *hatha* yoga in the west has resulted in yoga being sold in the marketplace as one of the latest aerobic type workout routines to achieve a slim, lean body. Feurestein remarks in an interview on this subject that "traditional *hatha* yoga wants us to transform the body into a divine body and to prepare it to withstand the onslaught of the dualities (*dvandva*) such as pleasure and pain. The yoga *asanas* and *pranayamas* are

definitely useful to people. I do not want to take these away from the practitioners. But they do not constitute the essence of yoga". (Feuerstein 2001 p. 5)

However, one of the greatest of yoga teachers in the 20th century, Sri Krishnamacharya disagrees with Feuerstein on this point of definition. He states "just because a person is not practicing *dhyana* (meditation) but only *asanas*, we cannot say he is not practicing yoga. In a body, each limb belongs to the body. Similarly, practice of *asanas* is indeed practice of yoga to that extent" (Martin 1988 p. 4). Our current leading yoga teachers also speak of their *asana* practice as being the equivalent to a moving meditation.

You can apply the theory of *karma* yoga to your practice of asana. Swami Sivananda one of the great karma yogis in India, described the inner attitudes (*bhavana*) of karma yoga as *Samatva*-the attitude of equanimity or extreme tolerance and patience; *Nimitta*-the attitude that you are the "lords instrument; *Nishkama*-non-expectation of thanks or reward, grateful to be of service; and *Atma* and *Naraayana*-the view that the lord is there in the person that you serve.

He describes the benefits of *karma* yoga as the eradication of ego, purification of the heart, absence of any superiority towards others, relief of strain or burden in the work, and the preparation of the mind for the "dawn of knowledge'. He argues that the yoga of action (*karma* yoga) is better than the path of renunciation. So in *asana* practice, I work with non-attachment to achievement, patiently without thought of reward, for the benefit of others, such as my pupils, and for my health so that I may serve others for longer in this life. The secrets of *karma* yoga are that I work as hard as those who are ambitious for reward, treat my body as a temple of the lord, just like those who seek bodily perfection, and remain as happy as those whose only aim is their own happiness and comfort (Sivananda, S. 1985). The *karma* yoga element is the social work element in the spiritual practice of yoga as engaged buddhism or charity in christianity is the social work element of those religions.

Varenne's view is that yoga is a worldview or *weltanschauung*. He believes there is nothing occult about the essential teachings and practices and that *asana* is only one aspect of yoga. (Varenne 1976). While I agree that *asana* is only one aspect or limb of the body, writers on yoga seem to be at pains to emphasize this point, because of the perceived western obsession with the bodily aspects of yoga and its use in the pursuit of the body beautiful.

Contrast this view with Patanjali when he deals with the nine obstacles or *kleshas* that can hinder the progress of the yoga practitioner. These are disease, inertia, doubt, carelessness, laziness, worldliness or attachment to sensual pleasure, delusion, lack of perseverance, and instability. He provides a number of ways to overcome these obstacles. The first way is "intense application of one *"tattwa"* or principle. Feurestein makes this point in his interpretation of Patanjali. To quote, from Feurestein,

"Yoga offers a wide choice of techniques and "props" for concentration and the yogin, i.e. (the one who practices yoga) is free to select whatever method he feels is best suited to his needs and abilities". (Feuerstein 1989 p. 47)

My point is that *asana* can be the strategy adopted by some yoga students (including addicts) to overcome disease through single-minded dedication to this practice. My experience has been that the asana class is what keeps people coming back to yoga. It is what makes yoga unique for people. They generally feel great afterwards and it gives them the immediate benefits of well-being and incentive to begin addressing the many other obstacles on their path. That is why one of the most famous hatha yoga teachers, also a scholar, K. Pattabois Jois of Mysore, says "practice and all is coming" (Swenson 2000 p. 7). Then the students become interested in other aspects of yoga such as meditation and study of texts.

At the same time, I have not found that regular daily asana practice provides any mystical gains or guarantees against illness or injury or that it addresses addictions. On the contrary, I have found that it can potentially aggravate or create minor physical injuries associated with their own existing bodily

limitations and pre-existing injuries. There are many aches and pains associated with the body adjusting to a rigorous physical practice. I accept this potentially negative side effect as a cost to maintaining the sense of wellness experienced in the practice. Any stopping of the practice quickly reminds me of the gains I could potentially lose if I maintained any lethargy. I have found it very useful to learn other techniques of yoga practice for the inevitable times when physical injury or illness restricts completely my physical practice.

Meditation is best learnt during a period of complete physical health. With regular practice, it can become one's primary practice tool when illness and injury restrict all other forms of practice. Further, at some point, the addict needs to address the internal thinking patterns that are creating the addictions, and meditation is the primary method suggested by Patanjali and the 12-step program of recovery from addiction. So yoga teachers need to teach a range of yoga techniques to addicts in recovery ranging from bodily posture work, breathing exercises and relaxation techniques, combined with short guided meditations so that a student may continue to practice yoga during periods of minor illness, sickness or injury⁴¹.

Many westerners are attracted to yoga directly because of its health maintenance benefits rather than its transformative power. Indeed just as social workers have been described as societies' "maintenance mechanics" (Davies 1985 p. 28), yoga teachers are performing a similar function for their students aging bodies in a growing complementary health industry. I do not personally feel any antagonism with this conservative, "realist's" view of actual practice in the two respective areas of practice. In one sense, Yoga requires practitioners to maintain their dedication for its own sake, whether the benefits flow to one or not, in a similar manner to the concept of divine grace in the Christian tradition. Yoga also warns more advanced practitioners to be very

⁴¹ In sickness, some people argue that the ego is lower and maybe meditation can be more profound. I have not found it to be the case. The worst time to learn something new is when you are sick. Patanjali identifies sickness as an obstacle to practice.

wary of being caught up in admiring or exploiting any higher insights or powers, called *siddhus*, that may arise as a result of the practice.

I believe the greatest threat in the westernization of yoga comes not from the limited focus on the “body beautiful” but from the likely corporatisation and increased commercialization of yoga so that it becomes a practice beyond the financial reach of the poor, disadvantaged and marginalized, including many with addiction problems.

As yoga becomes more popular and widespread in the west, it faces some dangers inherent in maintaining a tradition and “market-share” such as materialism, managerialism and fundamentalism. In yoga there are many schools that claim sole authenticity in methods and demand of their adherents absolute allegiance to their “styles” of yoga. The institutional structures may be as hierarchical as any religion and most power resides exclusively with the guru or leading yoga teachers. Yoga techniques can also be manipulated for material gain or more sinister motives. A more recent trend is the development of global management companies that employ yoga teachers in their state of the art studios across continents.⁴²

In the post-modern world it becomes increasingly difficult to hold to absolutism and abusive practices eventually get exposed. Students are free to mix and match styles of yoga if they wish and even develop new forms of physical practice much like those current masters of hatha yoga did in further developing the ancient yoga practices. (Cushman 1999) Schools of yoga are reacting to this trend and, like the various Christian Churches and modern corporations, are protecting their turf through formal accreditation processes, professional associations, copyright, franchising and the creation of authoritarian structures of control and hierarchy. One of the challenges of this research is to explore how *karma* yogis have adapted their programs to reach the marginalized addict population and whether they can create resources for these groups in the yoga community.

⁴² Pure Yoga in Asia is an example of this trend and more are expected.

Normalising Addiction in Yoga Philosophy and Practice

Phoebe a yoga teacher in focus group 2 overcame heroin addiction through yoga including living at a local yoga ashram. Here she talks about yoga's importance in her recovery and what a revelation she found in yoga philosophy and practice.

“Yoga has a different way of looking at addiction. Yoga philosophy says that “you’re a great person and that is why you are going through this”. Yoga is a whole philosophy. It works with energy, and meditation. It looks at things that can happen to addicts and says meditation can help you this way. It can be very specific and it was meditation and asana that got me back together. Both of those things. In working with addicts, I think that yoga therapy, meditation and stress relief are much more important than teaching someone advanced asana”.⁴³

Yoga philosophy posits a seer, or higher self, which is ordinarily hidden from our everyday consciousness. This awareness becomes available to us when we are able to experience a calm and still mind. So Phoebe and other addicts can take encouragement from the normalizing of addiction in the yoga philosophy as simply an extreme form of what every one's mind is capable of and to know that they can access a part of themselves that is untouched by the addiction.

This normalization of addiction is mirrored in the non-judgmental approach of social work towards people with addiction problems. Ward in his *Good Lives* conceptual approach to offender rehabilitation has stressed the value of the non-judgmental therapist attitude as vital to successful engagement in effective rehabilitation efforts. (Ward 2004)

The “Falling Away” of Addiction in Yoga

The other key element in the yoga *sutras* relating to addiction is detachment from the things that bind or lead to suffering and harm. Yoga was described

⁴³ This view which found strong support in the focus group has significant implications for the type of yoga program in this field. Simple achievable asanas should be taught along with meditation and relaxation exercises.

by Claire Fleming as “like getting on a train from the platform”. “You also need to lift your back foot away from the platform to take the yoga journey”. This element is regarded as the negative side of the discipline, although it does not imply that the yogi is aiming to lead a passionless life. In fact it is quite the opposite. Patanjali in the yoga *sutras* concurs with the Buddha that, to the discerning, all life is unsatisfactory or impermanent and that the cause of our suffering is our identification or attachment to a permanent self or phenomena. The release from this suffering is the development of insight into the nature of impermanence and the path or techniques of transformation (i.e. adhering to the eightfold path in buddhism or, by analogy, the eight limbs of yoga).

Purification via detachment is part of most religious practices. Rather than emphasizing the giving up of things, yoga speaks of negative habits simply falling away. Many aspects of yoga assist in this purification process. *Hatha* yoga (the salutations, *asana*, *pranayama* and relaxation or *pratyahara*, (meaning, withdrawal from external stimuli), and the other limbs of the eight fold path help to purify the body and mind of the practitioner preparing the aspirant for the inward disciplines of concentration, meditation and contemplation. The saying of *mantras* or repetition of sacred words or words that have a special significance such as “love” provides for an identification process with the object of the word or phrase. *Karma* yoga is the path of selfless action and also includes the notion of skillful action or action which works with the flow of life and causes minimum harm. Yoga also has a mythic quality given its long history. The stories, rituals and history in its practices help the practitioner to identify with its traditions and aims which include leading an exemplary life governed by ethical foundations.

Yoga tends to maintain a “ladder” conception of the spiritual path alongside a holistic view that we are in fact whole but that various dark aspects of our character obscure our vision. Here the yoga philosophy draws near to the Jungian approach, which posits a shadow in the unconscious. Georg Feuerstein writes in a preface to a book, which looks at applying yoga to our daily lives that “ whenever we step into the light, our shadow side also

becomes more apparent. Working with our psychological shadow is a necessary task if we want to integrate our spiritual values and goals and thus our yoga practice into the rest of our lives” (Lasater 2000 p. 5) The ladder view can be contrasted with a more realistic view of growth or development described by Jungians as awkwardness, a shedding, loss, or a recognition of the dialectic of change and changelessness (Hillman Ventura 1993).

For the addict with a passion for yoga, the addiction becomes part of the shadow aspect of their life. Initially, the addiction may be something they “hate about themselves” which they try to repress. But this effort of will may tend to only makes the addiction stronger. So they feel as though they lead an incongruous life, which disturbs their psyche. Eventually in the Jungian approach and the 12-step program, they need to “befriend” the addiction, admit that it is indeed a part of them and begin the process of having a dialogue with it. In the narrative based, 12-step recovery program, a dialogue with the shadow addiction takes place. First it is recognized. Then understanding comes through reflection, analysis and storytelling. Narrative therapy makes use of similar but more sophisticated techniques. Through the acceptance and recognition that only a higher power can aid the addict in not being absorbed into the shadow of addiction, transformation gradually takes place and the addiction may fall away.

Yoga tends to discourage this ownership of the shadow approach preferring to emphasize the “falling away” of negative habits by emphasis on the adoption of positive habits and views. Carl Jung critiqued patanjali’s yoga for placing too much stress on transformation of the shadow by the application of the conscious mind. He tended to reject yoga as inappropriate for western minds because he felt this was exactly the existing problem in the western psyche-an overemphasis on the conscious mind (Coward 2000). My personal view is that Jung’s realizations on the personal shadow are complementary to a yoga practice. Indeed he personally recommended yoga to the founder of Gita yoga, which was established in Melbourne, Australia, by a Western woman, Margrit Segesman, as the best way for her to overcome her tuberculosis (Segesman 1973 p. 14). Moreover, Patanjali was aware of the

power of the unconscious and he recognized the power and importance of dreams and the analysis of dreams (Feuerstein 1989).

Robert Johnson, a Jungian writer, speaks of the use of the active imagination, which requires the person to objectify the shadow aspect and enter into dialogue (Johnson 1991). Then, Johnson recommends that the ethical dimension of the conscious mind be included in decision making before deciding upon a plan of action. The ethical foundations of yoga in *yama* and *niyama* can assist in clarifying directions by bringing the higher mind to the discussion. So the combined “Yoga-Jungian” approach to the shadow is to bring the highest conscious mind to bear upon the manner in which the shadow is brought into the holistic life of the yoga practice⁴⁴ (Richo 1999).

The failure of repression has been shown in the terrible consequences of the failure of Christianity to deal with the dark side of its celibacy vows. The implications of refusing the dark side are so profound that writers like Tacey can take the “befriending of the shadow” assumption for granted. In experiencing the benefits of this approach in my own life I searched the spiritual and yogic literature for clues to whether this more enlightened approach was already known⁴⁵. In Yoga there is the concept of the unity of opposites and hence the need for both lightness and darkness, but the overall thrust of the literature is towards a rejection of the darkness. In the broader spiritual literature, there is a recognition of the value of the rejected, such as in the need to search in unusual places “like Nazareth-What good could come out of there?” (Johnson 1991 p. 9). Discovering this literature was like finding a missing clue to the jigsaw puzzle of thinking that yoga could be where my future lay in social work practice. As Robert Johnson says “reality is found in the wholeness of our experience, not in any one view of the world” (Johnson 1993 p. 9) even the yogic view. He speaks of the need to balance our lives by honoring the shadow of our existence even in a ceremonial way.

⁴⁴ Otherwise exploration of the shadow may be very dangerous.

⁴⁵ I subsequently found one reference in yoga, which strongly supports the Jungian position. See *Health Healing and Beyond* by T.K. V. Desikachar Aperture Foundation 1998 Pg 172. it is extremely interesting that Krishnamacharya, perhaps the greatest hatha yoga teacher in the 20th century, held these views.

Through this practice of owning my own shadow in its positive and negative traits I was able to gradually loosen the obsessional nature of my dark side and live a more relaxed and complete lifestyle which still accorded with my ethical yoga foundations. I know I have discovered nothing in this approach that doesn't accord with achieving balance and diversity in life but it makes a huge difference to have a conceptually grounded understanding and rationale for unity in opposites and the paradox of healing. Most writers espousing the embracing and understanding of the shadow emphasize that this exploration must be done with discernment, ethical caution and self-study.

In yoga, the other voice brought into the dialogue is the higher self, buddha consciousness or the transpersonal self through meditation. Here is one focus group member describing how Vipassana meditation created the insight into his addictions to enable them to “drop away” from his behaviours. Notice that no force or willpower was involved other than determination to practice the technique. In fact, this technique creates a clear and calm mind to observe the sensation of addiction.

“There was a period of time over four or five courses (of vipassana) that I would have given up addictions for a year or two at a time. But the thread of it would still be there and I could still come back into it. Until one time where I clearly had the experience of it. At that point I understood that what I was craving was this particular sensation, not the actual substance that much. It was the dawning of awareness and, at that point, it sort of dropped off. It didn't exist. I didn't give it up. It gave me up, so to speak”.

The “self study” or *svadhyaya* aspect of *kriya* yoga is reflected in this observation.

Svadhyaya Or Self Study in Dealing with Addiction

The traditional interpretation of *svadhyaya*, in commentaries on the yoga *sutras*, referred to the study of sacred texts and the repetition of mantras. It also includes the requirement that the student learns from the teacher and studies on their own behalf. Krishnamacharya responded in an interview that *svadhyaya* “does not necessarily mean they should read and recite Vedas”.

He states “svad” in sanscrit means “one’s own”, i.e. whatever textual requirements are there for one’s own sanctity, one should read and follow”(Martin 1988 p. 6). Hindu philosophy and practice is not a pre-requisite or requirement of Yoga. Once again, the Yoga path out of addiction is not prescriptive and requires the person to take some responsibility for their yoga education.

In the West, there is no equivalent to the guru-student relationship. This has resulted in the blending and proliferation of yoga styles and schools with students free to choose amongst the ever increasing range of approaches. With this increased freedom comes the discipline and responsibility on western yoga teachers to justify mixed approaches that deviate from established styles and schools.

Feuerstein also warns yoga therapists in the West of the dangers of reductionism in yoga and calls for practitioners to maintain a holistic paradigm in yoga as a spiritual discipline and not just a set of useful bodily postures and breath control exercises. He states that “yoga therapists will have to become highly skilled in navigating the potentially hazardous waters between therapy and religion-a challenge they face, for instance, with some psychotherapists” (Feuerstein 2001 p. 7). He argues that yoga teachers must study the texts and situate yoga in the context of the literature from which it emerged. I agree with his view but would add that a Westerner should study these texts critically with the aim of considering their relevance to current practice in our historical time.

Rather than talking about sacred texts from any religious or spiritual tradition, the yoga teacher in the addiction field would find more acceptance and less alienation from potential students by referring to yoga assisting in the practice of mindfulness, or learning to monitor our thoughts and be present to current realities. Physical yoga practice helps to improve health and sense of well being, helps make us more alert and provides us with more energy. Yoga teaches us to fully immerse ourselves in the present moment in whatever activity is required to be done. It helps us to focus on the process without

worrying about outcomes or perfection, seeking gradual improvement and accepting occasional set backs as part of the journey.

Yoga talks about our normally distracted “monkey mind” which darts from thought to thought often distracted, aimless, or conditioned by cravings and attachments. Yoga helps the practitioner to develop “the mind’s eye” or the ability to observe the thinking and feeling or sensations processes of the mind-body complex. Yoga practice helps reduce the intensity of the attachments through withdrawal and detachment from external stimuli. Yoga strengthens the mind’s existing ability by developing these higher functions that lie dormant in most people’s brains. Gradually, what is learnt through actual experience in yoga class can be transferred to other areas of the person’s life (Levine 2000).

Conclusion

I found *kriya* yoga or the yoga of action to be the crucial ingredient in overcoming an addiction using yoga. The yoga literature, interviews with experienced yoga teachers, the focus groups, and my own experience consistently reinforced the essential role of *kriya* yoga in addressing addiction.

Yoga teachers working with people with addiction issues need to be very creative in their approach in establishing rapport and engagement with participants. Any limb of yoga or even outside this set of practices can be applied that suits the person involved. The more options a student has in practicing yoga, the more likelihood that the person will not suffer from set backs. Yoga can become a positive addiction in the person’s life and contribute to a new non-addictive identity in recovery. Gradually, the positive addiction to yoga can be replaced by a deeper, more committed but relaxed approach to the subject. The yoga teacher plays a crucial role in creating a safe space in which the students can experience transformative moments and in helping the student develop a regular daily practice through their regularity and dependability in delivering yoga classes.

Karma yoga aims to provide yoga to addicts and other marginalized groups who are left out of the existing and growing commercialized mainstream yoga schools and other products. The purpose is to bring the benefits of the yoga discipline to people who want to use the practice and may not be able to afford or choose the existing commercial product. The availability of yoga should not depend upon the social and material circumstances of the person.

Transformation in yoga is a gradual process that relies on the student undergoing a disciplined practice without interruption⁴⁶. The emphasis in yoga is placed upon the positive side of maintaining the daily practices with the gradual falling away of negative attachments over time.

⁴⁶ Without interruption does not equate to every day. Even totally dedicated yoga teachers have one day off per week from hatha yoga to rest their bodies. Meditation practice is generally regarded as continuous daily practice and this builds up over a considerable time.

Chapter 6 Yoga Programs in Corrections and the Addiction Recovery Field

“The most that any one of us can seem to do is fashion something-an object or ourselves- and drop it in the ocean of confusion, make an offering of it so to speak, to the life force” (Becker 1973).

Introduction

In this chapter I reflect on the implications of operating a yoga program in the corrections and addiction recovery field by looking at existing and past programs, my own experiences as a teacher and student of yoga in this area of practice and the experiences of other yoga teachers based upon the focus groups and interviews conducted for this research. The context of service delivery is explored to help situate these programs. Finally, I draw some conclusions around the programmatic requirements for operating a yoga program.

The Context of Service Delivery in Corrections

In Victoria, Australia, a recent prison health study summarized the picture of the findings that emerged on the prison population as an “extra-ordinarily needy, unhealthy and life damaged cohort” with all the leading main disease groups over-represented (Deloitte Consulting 2003). Yet the focus of most program activity in prisons is industry where prisoners work for six hours per day, 5 days per week and receive extra earnings as part of their involvement in the prison industry. There is real competition for prisoner time between the various educational, work, and therapeutic programs in the minimum 12 hours, or 8 hours per day for high security prisoners, spent outside the prison cell. Education programs are resourced by enrollment numbers even when, in a recent review, 35% of the participants withdrew from the course before they commenced. (Bearing Point 2003) Most prisoners have negative experiences of education from past failures so the learning provided is highly focused on gaining employment. The frequent movement of prisoners and the short term nature of most imprisonment means that obtaining even entry level qualifications are difficult to achieve and the nature of most detention orders means that most courses taught in prison fail to be completed. There is a

serious lack of access to on-line learning opportunities, for security reasons, although this may improve in the future. In progressive circles, there is considerable interest in the concept of a prison as a “learning community” which would involve the prison being more open and accessible to the use of volunteers in prison education and recreational activity (Bearing Point 2003). The prison experience is seen as only one element of a comprehensive intervention under the concept of “throughcare” where the emphasis is on reintegration rather than simply reduction in recidivism upon release.

Throughcare includes the provision of post release support which must commence in pre-release preparation. Reorganizing correctional service delivery around communities could become a significant new direction for corrections in that there is a redirection of correctional resources to working within defined communities, preventing imprisonment and providing resources and support for reintegration for ex-prisoners. The key question will be “what community is this prisoner going to participate upon release? There is an implied criticism that the evidence-based approach to correctional programming has been too narrow and rigid and more individualized planning and intervention needs to occur. Even the collateral consequences of imprisonment on communities needs to be addressed in this new approach so that communities can begin to thrive again rather than see their service and opportunities decline. In this approach there is no generic program or idea that will suit all prisoners and emphasis is placed upon the need for a collaborative and comprehensive effort with all individuals (Borzycki M 2005). This approach has implications for the approach taken by any yoga program operating in any facility given the short term nature of placement and the release of the resident back into their community.

Finally it should be noted that Victoria’s rate of imprisonment is ten times lower than the United States of America⁴⁷ and reflects the impact of more enlightened sentencing practices, more effective community safety prevention strategies, lower crime rates and other social factors. This brief overview

⁴⁷ Victoria’s rate is 70 per 100,000 compared to the US figure of 700 per 100,000.

highlights the social context of addiction recovery in corrections where oppression and marginality are critical environmental factors impinging on any program effectiveness.

The Context of Service Delivery in Addiction Recovery Services

There are a large range of addictions now recognized as legitimate policy and program targets because of their harmful impact on families, workplaces and the community. Addictions of various kinds are now considered to be one of the most costly health problems facing most economies (Kreston 2000). Alcohol abuse and smoking remain the predominant legally harmful substances. The huge range of legal and illicit drugs, other chemical substances and gambling form the major targets of funding programs. Increasingly other forms of addiction are being well recognized as causing significant harm, which include sex, food, entertainment and even physical exercise. Some theorists speak of an “addictive society” while Marxist writers point to the class nature of the link between addiction types and the criminal lifestyles required by working class addicts (Helmer 1975). Social work practice models identify sociocultural factors affecting drug use and establish a link between socio-economic deprivation, marginalisation and illicit drug use (Barber 1995).

In the addiction literature, various models or paradigms have held sway. Some link to the professions involved, other to various world views such as religion that have dominated thinking about addiction for centuries. It is common in the literature to point to the limitations or flaws in the various models and, following these critiques of previous models, conclusions are drawn about the need for a more holistic approach to the individual based upon harm minimization principles (Thombs 1994).

Alternatively, there is also strong advocacy for particular approaches such as family systems therapy in social work and a clear divide between the abstinence based, 12-step developmental model and the harm minimization approach. Evaluative studies of various treatment approaches report very

high rates of relapse in treatment and after treatment ends (McMurran 1994). Anecdotal evidence points to the same phenomenon. Addicts enter treatment services frequently and experience many relapses. An ex-drug detoxification unit worker and social worker expressed a view to me that most addicts use withdrawal or detoxification centers as places to recuperate, receive help with social security, and return to the community to recommence their addiction. Waiting lists for long-term treatment beds are over six to twelve months in Victoria, Australia.

The economics of the drug treatment system is focused on finding new alternative drug substitution treatments that are more effective and less harmful than existing treatments, and delivering a range of existing and proven pharmacological substitute therapies such as methadone. The cost of all the pharmacological approaches dominates the overall costs of treatment of addiction in comparison to the cost of addiction preventative education and all existing treatment services such as counseling, group work and therapeutic communities. Twelve-step programs would hardly rate a mention in an economic analysis of drug treatment services despite their program importance to many recovering addicts on the street. Complementary therapies would also rarely rate a mention. The application of new pharmacological solutions supports the general direction of service delivery towards home-based withdrawal support services and community treatment support. The people who are received into the short-term residential withdrawal units have been assessed as inappropriate for home-based services and tend to have the more significant addictions. These are the participants more likely to be exposed to an in-house yoga program.

There is also greater recognition of diversity in the postmodern environment where gender, cultural background, age, sexual preference, class and race and even spiritual belief systems are significant factors in peoples' identity and hence response to treatment. For example, Kreston argues, in *Bridges to Recovery*, that the assumption in 12 step programs of "power over" something is not universally understood by other cultures and appears to originate in European Christian foundations. Being born poor and male in America, aside

from having an addicted parent is the most prevalent risk factor for addiction (Kreston 2000). This finding has implications for the type of yoga provided in the addiction area. It needs to be highly sensitive to the diverse subjectivities and marginal experiences and lifestyles of the majority of the participant group.

Given this social context of the centrality of oppression and marginalisation, lets turn to look at the existing and past attempts to introduce yoga and meditation to the participants involved in these two human service systems.

Bo Lozoff and the Prison as Ashram

The introduction of yoga and meditation in corrections and drug treatment services has been taking place for some twenty years coinciding with its gradual expansion into western culture. The most famous of the current programs operating in the world include Bo Lozoff's Prison Ashram Project⁴⁸ and various off-shoots including The Prison Phoenix Trust in the United Kingdom(Lozoff 2000; Lozoff & Braswell 1989). These programs provide volunteer yoga and meditation teachers for correctional institutions, support the volunteer network through engagement and advocacy with prison authorities and engage with prisoners via an extensive correspondence service. They distribute yoga literature free, especially Bo Lozoff's book '*We're All Doing Time*'(Lozoff 2000), and rely upon donations to operate their services.

Bo Lozoff is an American yoga teacher who through personal experience with a brother-in-law sentenced for drug trafficking came to the realization that a prison cell resembled a meditation cell at a frugal ashram. His book has become a classic yoga text inside prison in the UK and the USA. In the book, Bo explained the yoga path including simple meditation techniques, *hatha*

⁴⁸ Information on the Prison Phoenix Trust in the United Kingdom can be obtained from www.prisonphoenixtrust.org.uk
Information on the Bo Lozoff's human kindness foundation in the United States of America can be obtained from www.humankindness.org

yoga *asana* practices, breathing exercises, and prayer and contained many letters from prisoners including his return correspondence. The Dalai Lama wrote the foreword to the book with his primary emphasis being on developing a mind of compassion and kindness as essential to prison life. Bo advocates that prisoners have a wonderful opportunity locked in their cell and external prison to develop a personal spiritual practice along with committed social activism. There is a recognition that prisons are very negative, soul destroying places and that his work could be seen as “tools of the oppressors” by the prison reform movement (Lozoff 2000, p. 8). Bo’s defense to this challenge is to defend his work as there is little on offer in the U.S. that provides immediate spiritual help to current inmates. There are some similarities between being in prison and creating our own “prison” on the outside but there are also some very clear differences to the prison environment, experience and population that make his catchy saying seem superficial. His work has spread to the establishment of similar groups in the UK, Canada, France, Italy and other European countries.

Bo Lozoff’s work has essentially consisted of visiting jails, giving lectures, providing large numbers of free copies of his publications inside prison, organizing meditation and yoga teachers for prisons on request, corresponding with 35,000 prisoners in 2000 gradually increasing from only a few prisoners over the past 10 consecutive years, and operating a spiritual community which ex-prisoners can visit with permission upon written application. In 2002/3, Bo entered a period of 12 months total silence at his retreat centre. Recently he aims to provide a post release location for some of his most interested students to come and live after release from prison. Reading his many publications, I think that his ashram would attract a mixture of yoga aspirants from the general community who are interested in his karma yoga philosophy and experiencing his presence, the friends and supporters on men in prison whom he also makes contact with and some of his more committed students on release from prison.

The Prison Phoenix Trust in the UK is modeled on the Human Kindness Trust established by Bo Lozoff. It offers meditation and yoga training across the UK

in all custodial facilities including juvenile detention centers. They have managed to get their courses accredited by the Open College Network, which means that prison governors can fund the programs in their prisons if they so wish. They are completely self-funding and employ four part-time staff and a part-time accountant. They have 30 volunteers handing 3000 letters of correspondence including sending books, tapes and letters. Their newsletter is sent out to over 6000 people including 300 yoga teachers some of whom are regular prison teachers. They support their yoga teachers with a network and operate workshops. In a Prison Services Journal article, The Prison Phoenix Trust stated that they train, screen and support 80 yoga and meditation teachers working all over the UK in prisons.

In his recent writing Lozoff has emphasized the service or *karma* aspect of yoga in line with the Dalai Lama's approach. He has watched the prison population explode in the USA. He identified three principles of practice that he advises prisoners to follow, based upon his reading of all the spiritual paths of the world. These are adopting a simple and modest lifestyle, dedication to service (*karma* yoga) and commitment to a daily spiritual practice. The correspondence and distribution of newsletters and books is also connected to the development of a community of practitioners in the system and beyond.

It is difficult to assess his work without knowing the extent of the actual amount of practice that is going on. While he has some powerful stories of transformation in particular individuals to show and the expansion of his program to other countries, he may be finding that indifference from correctional authorities and apprehension from therapeutic professionals and the chaplaincy inside prisons to his simple non-denominational message makes his access to prisoners more difficult. He claims to have many thousands of prisoners maintaining correspondence with his program. Bo Lozoff realized that both spiritual practice and committed social action were required in the prison environment. He throws down the challenge to the prisoners to "start where they are" and begin to show compassion for others, (guards included). It's a really challenging message, but he claims that it is

only since he has combined these two aspects that his work in prison has taken off and grown exponentially.

Bo Lozoff points out that one's motivation or inner attitude is the crucial determinant. *Karma* yoga brings joyfulness to the practitioner in the experience itself.

Prison Meditation Programs and the Vipassana Meditation Method as taught by Goenka

Socially-engaged Buddhism is worldwide movement that uses Buddhist principles to redefine social service (Fromartz 2001; Sherwood 1987). Many programs combine meeting social and economic needs with teaching meditation and yoga. There is also a tradition for Buddhist chaplains and teachers visiting correctional and addiction recovery programs and offering their teachings on meditation and yoga.

One of the most famous programs is the Navjyoti Drug Abuse and treatment center founded by Kerin Bedi and operating in New Dehli and many other locations around India.⁴⁹ Yoga forms part of an intensive range of complimentary therapies that addicts use in an abstinence-based program. Kerin is famous for introducing Vipassana meditation into Tihar prison when she was the governor of the prison and in using the same method to help train police.

Vipassana is a Buddhist method of meditation taught by Goenka, a former Burmese businessman who overcame addiction to morphine because of chronic migraines after learning the meditation techniques. It claims to consist of the original techniques taught by the Buddha and involves participants undergoing a silent 10-day retreat where most hours of the day are spent in meditation. The first few days are spent in observing the touch of the breath and calming the mind. After this is obtained, the focus shifts to observing the sensations of the body and gaining direct knowledge of the impermanence of

⁴⁹ I had the good fortune to meet Kerin Bedi in New Dehli and spend an hour with her discussing her views

all sensations.⁵⁰ Through this deep awareness one understands the truth that we can disassociate from cravings and urges through control of the mind. The mind become purified through the strict ethical living in the course (celibacy, vegetarian diet, vow of silence, no harming or stealing or lying) and learning to allow negative, upsetting thoughts in the mind pass without being overwhelmed into acting on the feelings.

Goenka became famous when he inspired Kerin Bedi to transform Tihar Prison using Vipassana. Kerin is India's first female police officer and is a world-renowned prison reformer with exceptional management and community leadership skills. As a result of this success in one of the worst prisons in Asia, Vipassana has emerged as a popular and growing meditation movement inside western prisons. Goenka avoided a commercial business approach and developed vipassana across the globe into a successful volunteer-based, donation-only model. Each vipassana retreat centre is a separate non-profit trust run by a Board of Directors. Goenka appoints the teachers. The teachers control the Board. A volunteer staff of advanced students of Vipassana operates the centers, which provide free board and food to meditators. Donations finance everything.

In the US, some jails are offering the full ten-day course to prisoners.⁵¹ Significant planning is required prior to operating any course. Prison staff and administrators must be recruited to complete the course with the prisoners. Special separate food and lodging arrangements are required to totally separate the participants from the general prison population during the ten-day course. The location must be quiet with meditation space large enough for all participants in one room. A strict vegetarian diet is obligatory for the entire retreat. No outside contact for the duration of the course, including mail and TV, is permitted. Restriction of other activities includes prayer, and even exercises like yoga except for walking. Goenka allows no special restraints of

⁵⁰ I have undergone a vipassanna 10 day retreat so I am speaking from first-hand knowledge.

⁵¹ Lancaster Prison United Kingdom BBC News 10 July 2001 Also In NSW Department of Corrections has approved Vipassana trial for NSW corrections.

prisoners. Prisoners must not be handcuffed or chained. Security Protocols may require additional guards complete the course.

Studies have commenced in the US into the impact of Vipassana on recidivism and addiction.⁵² Researchers believe that anecdotal evidence does point to the increased benefit from this approach in giving the prisoners greater mind control over negative and upsetting cravings and emotions. They point to the intense blissful experiences that prisoners report from the experience and the benefit of the discipline and the resulting lifestyle changes in their behavior such as in diet, general attitude and interests in developing a meditation practice.

At the same time, there are difficulties in the program such as its denial of permission to maintain existing spiritual practices for participants during the period of the retreat, isolating people for ten days, fear of cult status despite its non-sectarian stance, and the high drop-out rate because of the difficulty of sitting for ten days straight. Although Vipassana dispute the high drop out rate often prison staff are the first to drop out or there can be a lack of sufficient staff interest, and other unavoidable legal, safety and logistical issues. These issues are challenges to the correctional authorities implementing the first programs in the US. In summary, the Vipassana movement offers a new technique that has some proven results in overcoming addictions in significant numbers. The challenge will be in actually implementing the program in sufficient locations and ensuring that ongoing facilities and services are available beyond the ten-day course to encourage the course participants to begin a daily meditation practice.

The advantage of the vipassana ten-day course is the intense high impact experience does have the potential for powerful impact and insight to be developed on participants. Whether this translates into longer-term lifestyle impacts from the experience of one program is unclear. Most experienced vipassana practitioners require the experience of a number of programs

⁵² Reported from WE Donaldson Correctional Facility Bessemer Alabama January 2002

before they report permanent changes to their addiction recovery. There is also the challenge of maintaining a personal daily meditation practice outside the structure of the course system. Careful screening is required to ensure that prisoners with existing mental or emotional conditions are assessed carefully before participation. Considerable preparation, planning and support are required from the prison authorities before commencing a program.

There are many other exemplary engaged Buddhist projects operating with marginalized populations. The Greyston foundation in New York, commenced by Roshi Bernie Glassman, as an outgrowth of the Zen Buddhist community of New York provides employment and housing opportunities through their bakery and other business operations within a Zen framework. Venerable Robina Courtin, a Tibetan Buddhist nun and teacher commenced the Liberation Prison Project and they work across 500 prisons in the U.S. providing materials and support and teaching to prisoners practicing meditation in prison.

Transcendental Meditation (T.M.) in Corrections

There has been extensive research conducted upon transcendental meditation (TM) and related mantra based meditation programs where clients learn to still the mind through repeating silently a phrase which usually has some spiritually relevant meaning for them⁵³ (Freeman, L. L. G. F. 2001). Currently I know of small pilot programs using TM as part of a comprehensive court diversion program for adult offenders generally sponsored by local Judges who are converts to TM. One operates in the St Louis Circuit Court in Missouri and another in Geraldton in Western Australia (King 2000, 2002).

During the 1970s, TM programs began to be implemented in US Prisons and drug treatment centres. Controlled studies were conducted in trial programs. The theory behind using TM as a treatment therapy in corrections was based upon Maharishi's view on crime that it represented a deep discontent in the

⁵³ IN TM the mantra is chosen by the teacher but other mantra based meditation groups allow the students to choose for themselves.

mind. A number of studies have been published which indicate that positive results have been obtained in nearly all circumstances (Gelderloos P et al 1991, O'Connell D 1991).

The programs evolved from students of TM working inside the correctional system or researchers/educational staff working in the correctional system. The TM system was attractive because it was relatively simple to learn, demanded no change in lifestyle, elaborate exercises, religious or even spiritual beliefs, and had immediate benefits in respect to improved behaviour and attitudes from the participants.

A mantra-based meditation technique, requiring two sessions of 20-30 minutes of practice daily in the morning and evening is required to achieve the benefits of the program. Offenders are voluntarily recruited and trained in the standard TM initiation method used in the community with the addition of some extra follow-up sessions. The system requires accredited TM Teachers, a seven step program of initiation comprising two initial lectures, private interview, four consecutive days involving 1.5 hours of practical instruction, followed by 12 voluntary follow up weekly meetings of question and answer sessions that aim to support the daily practice of the students. The mantra used by the student has no spiritual or other meaning and, like other mantra based meditation techniques, is repeated silently and constantly throughout the session.

The research claims of beneficial impact of the TM approach relate primarily to the physiological effects during and immediately after meditation sessions, and positive behavioral impact throughout the remainder of the day. These impacts have been thoroughly researched by Herbert Benson MD at Harvard University in other laboratory settings and the benefits of daily single pointed meditation are well known (Freeman, L. W. & Lawlis 2001, p. 172-94). Testimonials by prisoners profoundly affected by the technique who have become converts to TM have been used to promote the program in prisons. In his publications, The Maharishi speaks of the 1% effect, meaning that only a

small number of people who have found inner peace and are disciplined can inspire others and have a profound impact on those with whom they interact.

Most of the published “independent” research on TM in prisons seems to have taken place in the era of the 1970s. Not all the programs were successful. Factors working against the program reported in the literature include the incompatibility of prison life with the quiet personal practice of meditation, personality conflicts between correctional officers and TM Instructors, prisoners not completing the program for various reasons such as being moved to other jails because of overcrowding, lack of support for the program from correctional authorities. (Equally the most successful TM programs had significant support from the immediate senior jail management).

The program’s heyday was in the 1970s. TM charges the prison authorities for the program costs of the 12-week initiation. In Australia the cost currently is \$3500.00 per student. There are now competing meditation programs willing to provide a service on a donation basis. In one TM article, the authors claim that inmates are entitled to a “lifetime membership of services without charge from any of the TM centers in the USA.” This service is included in the normal package provided to community members. However many other additional services provided at these centers are very significant in costs such as ayurvedic consultations and treatments.

In 1996, The Enlightened Sentencing Project was initiated by Judge Mason in the St Louis Circuit Court in collaboration with the Missouri Department of Probation and Parole. It offers an alternative to incarceration via a probation order for appropriate court defendants using the TM Program in conjunction with holistic health strategies to reduce stress.

On the negative side, there is no evidence that any prisoners have continued the program beyond the 12-week introductory program. Maintaining a regular daily two sessions meditation program is a significant commitment. This discipline usually takes meditators years of gradual initiation and requires significant lifestyle changes. In the TM approach there is no

acknowledgement of the informal or structural determinants of addiction or offending.

Other yoga and meditation programs working in corrections and/or addiction fields

Ashram Based Programs

Some other organizations such as Ananga Marga with large ashrams operating in numerous countries provide a prison visiting service where they provide teachers for prisons and selectively invite promising students to their ashrams upon release. They promote this service and seek donations for their work on their Internet sites. There are regular new newspaper reports appearing on the internet of new yoga programs being offered to addicts and offenders by various groups in correctional centers and drug treatment services all over the globe. Many of these programs will not last very long, but the results can be very impressive in terms of immediate benefits for the participants. The sponsoring groups continue to provide these services from free charitable donations.

The Yoga Inside Foundation

One organization which aims to create the conditions for more long lasting programs which are properly supported is the Yoga Inside Foundation which was established by an innovative yoga teacher Mark Stephens in California USA. It aims to provide substantial support to yoga teachers who take on this *karma* yoga work and he has broadened the range of marginal organizations and locations which are now being provided with regular yoga teachers.

A yoga teacher, Mark Stephens⁵⁴, who operates a yoga school and also works in the juvenile corrections field, established this non-profit organization. Its aim is to provide yoga in places “where it is most needed yet least accessible such as schools, children’s shelters, prisons detention facilities, and inner city communities”. Their purpose is to “open new doors to yoga

⁵⁴ All the quotations relating to the Yoga Inside Foundation come from the website at www.yogainside.org

supporting high quality yoga teaching by trained, devoted and conscientious volunteer yoga teachers in several ways” such as:

recruiting, apprenticing, guiding, supporting a diverse spectrum of yoga teachers, helping to deal with the bureaucratic and other hurdles that often keep yoga and other healing practices out of places where they are needed most, providing teachers with equipment on site, liability insurance, and a modest stipend to help off-set travel costs, providing a support network that brings these *karma* yogis together to share their pioneering experiences and wisdom, and actively network with organizations and programs with a similar commitment to working with the people we serve. (www.yogainside.org)

There is a board of directors and an advisory Board of yoga teachers including some high-powered major US yoga teachers such as Eric Schiffman, celebrities with yoga training and people employed on the major US yoga journal. Ex-gangland members “turned onto Yoga” are also involved. The yoga teachers involved operate lucrative yoga retreats for paying customers and donate some or all of the proceeds to the non-profit organization. This makes their donation tax deductible and also the paying yoga students attending their yoga retreat programs can make part of their contribution as a tax-deductible donation to a charity.

Some of the challenges of yoga practice in these settings is described at their website. Events such as students leaving classes, interruptions, sporadic public announcements, etc all assist the teacher to develop patience, compassion and being present in the moment. A small example of practice wisdom is Mark’s recommendation that teachers line up students side by side facing each other “to avoid the hierarchical tension that might build up in students are positioned behind each other”

The Kripa Foundation

Father Joe Pereira, Director of the Kripa Foundation, in India, is a Catholic priest and certified Iyengar yoga teacher.⁵⁵ He commenced offering a recovery program to homeless alcoholics in June 1981. Since then the organization has grown to thirty-one facilities in eleven locations across India

⁵⁵ Information on the Kripa Foundation can be found at www.kripafoundation.org.

and there are outreach programs in Canada. They assist people suffering from chemical dependency and HIV infection. The program uses the twelve-step recovery program combined with daily yoga and meditation and western therapy. Father Joe regards the yoga as complementary of the twelve-step program. He describes the yoga as requiring “surrender, stillness and silence.” You surrender to the pose, come to a point of stillness in the pose and reach silence which allows the healing to take place. Father Joe has linked the yoga philosophy to the twelve steps and taken the best the west has to offer in therapeutic intervention to create a powerful intervention program. As a Christian, he is linked to the World Community of Christian Meditation which uses a mantra form of meditation. In his program, participants are free to use any mantra they choose.

The Free Inside Program

Elizabeth Duncombe has created a yoga, meditation and Chi kung program called “Free Inside” which commenced in Maui Community Correctional Centre in Hawaii which is a large jail complex. She completes 12-week cycles of 2 classes per week on one hour’s duration and has studied the impacts of her programs on the attitudes of participant residents in relation to self healing inner peace and compassion development. She is now marketing her program as an onsite consultant and trainer and is producing a manual (Duncombe 2005).

United Kingdom Research on Prison Phoenix Program

Mike Nellis from the University of Birmingham in the United Kingdom (UK) has released an article based upon researching the views of prison officers and management to the promotion of yoga in a female prison in the UK. He found that the yoga program suffered from the same lack of coordination and management that all prison based educational and other programs experience. The prison officers were impressed with the efforts of the Prison Phoenix yoga teacher in advertising her program and offering a class for staff as well as prisoners. They believed the most important factor in promoting the program was the personality of the yoga teacher. Given the lack of

coordination in prison programming the best approach was “bottom up” where the yoga teacher worked with the ground staff and management which developed a proposal that was put to senior management as a fait accompli (Nellis 2005).

Siddha Yoga Prison Project

Siddha Yoga has a prison project which has operated since 1979 from donations to their global operation. This is an out reach program which involved visits to numerous jails by their staff and volunteers where they conduct free classes inside the jails. They provide a home study course free of charge to the prisoners.

Twelve-Step Combined Yoga Programs

Annalisa Cunningham, yoga teacher, counselor and author provides a twenty one day training program based upon using hatha yoga combined with the twelve step program for anyone in recovery. Based in California, Annalisa grew up in an alcoholic family and married an alcoholic. She found yoga but was “spiritually bypassing” her addiction issues but was led to the twelve-step program when her marriage failed. The twelve-step program made her face the shadow side or reality of her feelings and grounded her life becoming her foundation. She noticed that most addicts have extremely poor skills in dealing with stress in their lives and handling stress is critical to successful recovery. She developed a 28-day yoga program, which is the period of time that most people spend in detoxification centers, and offered yoga classes three times per week, one for the patients, one for the families of patients, and one combined class. Demand for her classes grew and she offered a general community class for anyone “working the twelve step program in their lives” and her class attracted a mixture of people from all sectors of the twelve step community. Her approach to asana is to use gentle exercises, combined with affirmations linked to the 12-step philosophy and other visualizations. To quote from her book, *“Healing Addiction with Yoga,”* Cunningham states,

Recovery from alcoholism, substance abuse, and other compulsive addictive behaviours involves a complete lifestyle change. True recovery means much more than sobriety, which is only the beginning. It means recovery of our self-esteem and self-worth. It means recovery of our integrity. It means reconnecting with the part of ourselves that is able to give and receive love. It means reconnecting with the mystery of life and with our spirituality. It means recovery of our complete self: physical, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. True recovery is an ongoing process. It requires a lifestyle that enhances the health of the whole person (Cunningham 2003 p. 13-14).

Yoga Programs in Social Work

There are also examples of social workers and psychologists who are yoga enthusiasts or teachers who have conducted once-off experiments with particular populations, in particular, sex offenders and found that the application of regular weekly yoga classes have a beneficial effect on the overall performance in the other traditional therapeutic elements of the treatment program (Derezotes 2000). An evaluation study report by David Derezotes, an Associate Professor at the University of Utah Graduate School of Social Work, describes a weekly yoga and meditation program for adolescent sex offenders conducted over 9 months in 1998-2000. Eleven boys participated in the research and were interviewed face to face about their experiences of the program. Fourteen boys completed the program, five of whom stayed with the program over the full two-year period. Not a single boy on the program reoffended during the life of the program.

The program consisted of regular weekly hours⁵⁶ of *asana*, breathing exercises, and meditation practice in classes of slightly less than one hours duration at a time. The participants were very positive about the program emphasizing the immediate benefits of the program in stress release and relaxation. They disliked the disruption caused during the class by some members of the group. They wanted the class length to be extended.

⁵⁶ He doesn't record how many hours.

Yoga Programs in Victoria in Addiction Recovery

In Victoria Australia, The Buoyancy Foundation, a drug counseling service was one of the first agencies to include yoga in its range of complementary therapies offered to “users and those close to them” to help break the dominance of the total reliance in treatment on pharmacological methods. Homberg has documented evidence of the combined complementary therapy beneficial impact on primary counselling treatment which remains the focus of intervention. She points to the importance of the addict finding something “that you love that is greater than any drug” and many find it in the practices of alternative disciplines which open them to their inner divine and mysterious natures. She also comments that complementary therapies approach the participant “without a problem focus” and many clients find this experience particularly refreshing after their experience in the medical and correctional settings(Homberg 2001 p. 7).

From the experiences of existing and past attempts to introduce yoga and meditation in these service systems, I discuss some of the key issues that have emerged from my experience in teaching yoga in addiction recovery and from the focus groups and interviews conducted as part of this research. I examine the central issues of participant agency and social control, managing participant behaviours, and the phases of using yoga as a tool in addiction recovery.

Programmatic Issues from Focus Groups

Social Control and Yoga

I have created a separate section on this issue because it emerged in my own experience as a yoga teacher conducting classes in detoxification facilities. In these facilities yoga is taught as a seeding class, a class where new students are exposed to yoga as part of a weekly program of recreational and other

activities. The participants can vary in which stage of recovery they are in from pre-contemplation to maintenance stages of recovery. The seeding class is where the yoga teacher is saying, "here is something you can do for yourself". Yoga is about agency, creating a sense of achievement in the practice. It is an empowerment strategy. Here is a way you can calm your mind and feel good in your body. But you have to work at it"

Social control or authority is a part of all social work practice, even private practice. A kindergarten has social control issues to face. In the correction and addiction fields of service, social control issues are more significant because prisoners are detained against their will and involuntary participants are sometimes expected to attend programs as part of their general obligations while residents of the addiction recovery service. The same dilemma is not usually apparent in non-residential settings, where participants may choose involvement from a number of activities. In a correctional setting, where yoga participants are more likely to be voluntary, the paternalistic and formal security requirements can override and undermine the spiritual objectives of the practice and the informal social relationships and mood of the unit that exists amongst the residents can usurp the integrity and legitimacy of the program. An example from my own experience occurred when I taught a yoga class where a drug detoxification unit had been experiencing an undercurrent of sexual innuendo between the mixed sex residents over a number of days prior to the class. After the yoga class the unit held a group meeting and one complaint was made by a resident about the touching involved in adjusting a person in a pose. Although I received tremendous support from the management of the unit, to be accused of inappropriate touching was enough to make me stop teaching at that unit despite all the assurances of management that the accusation was totally groundless. From that day forward I also decided that, as a yoga teacher, I would never physically adjust someone in this field of service because of my knowledge as a social worker that many of the participants will misinterpret any touching as having a sexual component given that many have histories of sexual abuse. The yoga teacher is coming into the unit as an outsider, and

the informal social control power of the residents can be as powerful as the formal system of control operated by the program.

In the literature on spirituality and social work practice, a major concern is the danger that the workers' spiritual beliefs and practices could be imposed upon the participant. What is more likely to happen is that the residential facility may require residents to participate in the yoga program against their will. In this section I want to explore this issue and tease out some implications. Lindsay argues that any imposition of spiritual practices on others is an infringement of article 18 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 (Lindsay 2002, p. 63). Ellor, Netting and Thibault state "it is never appropriate to proselytize or promote the practitioners own religious beliefs, any more than it would be appropriate to influence political or other personal beliefs" (Ellor, Netting & Thibault 2002, p. 5).

In response to these claims it can be naively argued that the yoga class is "just an exercise class" and therefore these concerns don't really apply. While most participants may experience the class in this manner, and the class is focused primarily at the physical level, the teacher is aiming to engage the student at a deeper level through calming the mind and creating the conditions where the student will feel "there is something more to this" and want to explore yoga further. In defense of making AA meetings available to involuntary participants, one AA member stated to me that "you can lead a horse to water, but you can't make them drink. But don't forget there are two parts to that truism!" In other words, exposure to the program, in many involuntary situations, has been found extremely beneficial for some former addicts. Does this justify forcing others to undergo a spiritual practice?

Phyllis Day in her book *"A New History of Social Welfare"* argues that "synergistic evolution of the institutions of polity, religion and economy throughout time creates both social problems and their solutions and that social welfare and social work-its action arm-are the results" (Day 2003, p. 1-2). She argues that "paternalism, or the idea that we know what is good for others" is a significant problem in the field (Day 2003, p. 2). She writes

“As social helpers we have no right to impose what we believe on the lives of others. Our clients’ life situations and life experiences are different from ours and although we can empathize we cannot understand their lives. To assume that we do, to make life decisions for them is unethical. Society has a right to control dangerous or destructive behaviours, but most of social work does not involve these problems” (Day 2003, p. 3).

Her conflict, power-based perspective helps remind me that social control is an inevitable element in social work practice and that paternalism is gaining a foothold in public policy. In defence of paternalism, Mead writes that:

...“paternalistic programs do not take competence for granted. Neither do they dismiss it. To set requirements for client’s demands more of them than policies of service and subsidy that make no demands. But it is less demanding than the traditional anti-government policy of doing away with programs and leaving the poor to fend for themselves. Paternalism aims to provide a combination of aid and structure-which I call help and hassle-that it seems the seriously poor need” (Mead, 2005, p.24).

Advocates of paternalistic program provision claim that their results show that involuntary participants can do as well as voluntary participants in addiction recovery programs (Field 1998). My view is that it poses a more serious problem for unconventional programs like yoga, which in the community, are practiced on a voluntary basis.

Day’s warning to social workers to avoid imposing their views is a valid concern but it should not prevent social workers from providing activities that they think might benefit their clients. Obviously the value of an activity is significantly enhanced when the participants have maintained their agency in participation. The Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) Code of ethics requires social workers to “strive for impartiality in their professional practice, refraining from imposing their personal values, views and preferences on clients” (A.A.S.W. 2000, p. 6). It also requires social workers to “promote the self-determination and autonomy of clients” which includes providing them with “information regarding foreseeable potential risks and benefits of proposed courses of action” (A.A.S.W. 2000, p. 12). It requires that social workers “obtain a working knowledge and understanding of clients

racial and cultural affiliations, identities, values, beliefs and customs” (A.A.S.W. 2000, p. 14). The code of ethics provides guidelines for informed consent and involuntary clients which recognize the limitations other considerations can place on participants self determination, while still obliging social workers to encourage involuntary clients to participate in decisions about intervention (A.A.S.W. 2000, p. 13).

Social control lurks behind every professional intervention. We are all capable of imposing our “holy tablets” on others (Furlong, Smith & Goding 1986). With the involuntary client, James Barber provides some useful guidelines that help negotiate participant self-determination by accepting the political nature of the situation, maximizing self-determination, and operationalizing the program to maximize the negotiable elements in the program (Barber 1991). The yoga teacher can reinforce the “lack of social respect afforded many socially marginalized individuals and the extent to which they are subject to professional and social expectation” (Tangenburg 2002 p. 9). The staff and management rationale in the unit is that they sign an agreement in entering the unit to participate in all programs unless they are physically incapable, in which case staff will excuse them. People with physical conditions that preclude their physical involvement are encouraged to observe the class. Without undermining agency expectations on residents, the yoga teacher must introduce participant agency and dignity. The clients “subjugated knowledge” about yoga, being forced to work physically with significant pains, and their class experiences needs to be respected and acknowledged. Barber explains that, with the involuntary client, resistance and open defiance or hostility, can be an important form of resilience and ought to be respected (Barber 1991). Options are introduced so they can choose how they will be involved in the class, being able to choose between full or partial involvement and moving between observing and participation and being able to change your mind. In other words, the teacher provides the participant with agency to choose the level of involvement within the confines of the establishment resident rules. This approach is similar to the way a social worker, as probation officer is required to interpret and create agency in the broad non-negotiable conditions of their probationary order. When one uses this

approach, it is surprising how little is “not negotiable” and how much can in fact be negotiated.

Reflections on yoga teaching in addiction recovery

The yoga teacher needs to be aware that many of the docile and agitated behaviours of the residents may also be reactions to the medical interventions implemented to relieve the symptoms of withdrawal. The range of body types, the lack of power and agency experienced by clients, and the marginal lifestyles lived by addicts, combined with the effects of withdrawal and the medical interventions that help relieve these symptoms, has significant implications for the goals and aims of yoga taught in these circumstances.

The yoga taught must be adapted to the individual, as far as feasible in a group environment, and provide for a range of approaches making use of all the techniques of yoga. Yoga is a practical tool that cannot be imposed by a teacher. It is embraced by the student if it is to have a lasting impact. It is important that addicts are exposed to its potential benefits but beyond this initial exposure, imposition of yoga cannot be justified.

Real progress in yoga is slow and gradual, based upon consistent daily practice. The circumstances of the clients requires, that in the early stages of practice, the yoga classes will need to be accessible and free to the participants. Progress is likely to be unconventional and respectful of the marginal nature of the participants embracing their world and interpreting the aims and methods of yoga as a vehicle for maintaining their recovery.

If social control is intrinsically part of all social work practice, and Day holds this view, then what is really required is explicitness with participants of yoga as a program intervention in social work. The partnership between yoga teacher and program participant is based on reciprocity and mutual obligation. The importance of the yoga teacher negotiating involvement before the class commences was suggested as a way to overcome the difficulties enforced attendance can place upon the dynamics of the class, the yoga teacher and

the unwilling participant. Part of this responsibility includes negotiating with the agency flexible terms for participants that maximize their agency and choice around attendance, including the option to observe and not to actively participate, before commencing practice within the service. Our responsibility extends to awareness of the dynamics of social control that exist at all levels and within groups to minimize harm, promote agency in regard to type and choice of participation. It also extends to the type of yoga taught within these settings, a yoga that is inclusive of all spiritual beliefs or the absence of them, and that restricts its focus to the imparting of practical methods to aid the participant in their recovery. In this section, I explored the issue of social control and the involuntary client as a participant in a residential yoga class.

In the focus groups run with Yoga teachers and drug and alcohol workers there was strong support for funded or free programs. Certainly many of the people receiving yoga and meditation lessons inside prisons and drug treatment centers would find it impossible to pay the commercial rates in the market. Most yoga teachers would earn less than a base grade social worker but the issue of funding the programs remains significant.

All the yoga and meditation teachers experienced varied levels of support and mutual suspicion from management and front line staff. Some staff were threatened by a technology that was perceived to be arcane, new age and alien to their practice base. They would actively oppose its development and not cooperate with referrals. Some agencies would fail to integrate the volunteer program into the rest of their funded programs effectively guaranteeing its ineffectiveness. In other cases participants in the focus group reported opposition precisely because the program was demonstrating significant results and they appeared to be threatened by its success.

All teachers reported on the need to enter into more dialogue with students before, during and after classes. There is a process of gradual “winning over of front line staff and local management and clients” which the teachers need to be aware of and it requires the teacher to be reliable, provide quality, well planned lessons and be open to the present opportunities of each class. The

teacher needs to have realistic expectations of students in drug detoxifications and be ready for “walk outs” half way through a class, clowning and other childish behaviour, extremely inflexible and disabled bodies, negative undercurrents in units where staff and residents are in conflict over boundary issues and a host of other potential issues. At the same time, these classes can be very rewarding as students do experience profound moments of real impact from the yoga class. The feedback from students is extremely rewarding for the teacher as most really appreciate the opportunity to experience a class and express significant benefit from the class.

Another frequent occurrence in community programs is the phenomena of significant variation in attendance rates by students. Isabelle working at a drug treatment agency for adolescents found that her yoga classes were as useful for the staff and the clients of the agency whose attendance would vary from week to week. The strategy of offering a class for staff is often used to promote yoga in human services.

A significant safety issue for yoga teachers with addicts is the dosage of painkillers used by clients. When working in a yoga pose, pain is a key response that prevents injury by the practitioner. On high dosages of painkillers, addicts have no way of registering this response and that makes yoga potentially dangerous in these circumstances. Following an injury by a student, Mary in the focus group informed the group that the agency requires all students to get medical certificates indicating that they are ready to practice yoga and that they sign an indemnity form.

Teaching yoga in this environment can be quite a challenge. Basically the teachers are going into these environments because they believe in yoga and in what having these skills can do to assist in recovery for those people who decide to try out yoga. They know that only a very small section of the people participating will ever embrace yoga as a lifestyle. But this is also the same in the marketplace where large numbers may go to an occasional or casual class but only a very small percentage are attending frequently and really living the yogic lifestyle. The added challenge is that these peoples' lives are

generally very chaotic, and their problems are significant in the daily task to cope with life.

Here is how John described the challenge of maintaining his morale for the work with people in recovery;

“Sometimes when there’s not many participating it gives me faith that its not really numbers. It’s about my purpose. In a selfish sense, this is my vocation. I don’t get paid very well. In Buddhism if you do good *karma* work, then you bring good seeds to your own mind. I practice that on a personal level on a regular basis.”

For the yoga teacher coming from outside to visit an institution, there are certain basic supports that can help to ensure the class operates reasonably smoothly. Firstly, a space must be created in which to practice, which is safe and free from external distractions such as TV and other non-participating residents. There is usually a minimum amount of basic equipment needed which varies from teacher to teacher but given the degree of disability with some clients, even simple aids like sound chairs and wall space can help. All this preparation requires management support and help from the direct service staff on the day of the class. Generally, people need to be informed again on the day that “a yoga class is taking place” and services vary on whether residents must do the class or attendance is voluntary. The teacher needs to establish a rapport with potential students. This process of physically reaching out to residents, shaking their hands, asking their names, introducing yourself and having an informal conversation with small groups of residents can make the difference between full attendance and only the keener students participating. When the class is over, very often some students are very enthusiastic and wish to talk with the teacher. This is another opportunity to make connections via informal conversation.

John spoke of the need for regular attendance by the same teacher and “showing your face” in the unit as a crucial element to gaining credibility with clients and staff.

“You’ve got to show your face. Because some people will only see you and then know that the class is on. So the consistency of coming in one hour earlier and walking around the unit and gathering people. Just to be there and talk to them.”

In talking to the residents, the yoga teacher keeps the conversation focused on the class, maintaining their privacy and only seeking information relevant to conducting the class in a safe manner.

“Talking to the students before the class is mostly about health and safety. I have to ask about injuries. And I give them the general blurb which I give all my classes about not being competitive or forcing the pose. I have to find out if they are on painkillers or not”

Beyond the seeding class

After a student has been exposed to yoga and experienced a type of conversion where “this is for them”, the yoga teacher and yoga community plays a critical role in nurturing the experience and providing the holding environment to enable the student to continue the practice.

In the focus groups some of the yoga teachers supported the development of an ashram style program in the post release phase to help the interested students cement their embryonic practices.

“The ashram type set up has set times and workshops on boosting energy and self esteem. To get them into some sort of ritualistic life and slowly bring them into some sort of new life. Otherwise they get out and back into their old life, back into the same situations where they mix with old friends and where they’re in no choice to step outside of it. They need a bridging program to give them that choice to say you can choose another life. The problem is that they haven’t got the tools or the self-esteem to do so. You have to set that routine up for them”

Ashram style yoga programs of various kinds already exist and are built around famous international schools of yoga and Buddhist retreat centers. Any additional program would require substantial resources from an existing pool of community supporters, which does not exist outside of these schools. It is difficult to know whether these programs are available to people exiting recovery programs. In the past, ashrams have taken very small numbers of people in this category but increasingly they screen all referrals carefully and

people with these issues would not be accepted, except in very specific circumstances, where, for instance, the person was being sponsored by a member of the community that supports the ashram. The other limitation of the ashram model is that any such program would require considerable operational staff and physical resources and commitment from a large group of people who form a support base. There is an argument that there exist in Victoria already considerable resources devoted to adult residential treatment recovery programs and that this proposal would be adding to a market that is not a priority of government which is focused on increasing community programs that keep people in recovery connected to their community networks. Despite the above, there was considerable support within the focus group for a new ashram style yoga based program of recovery that allowed lengthy stays. Residential beds in this area are always at a premium and considerable program work would be required before a program could commence. Such a program would be best established as an offshoot of an existing service, given the radical nature of the program in comparison to existing residential programs.

The alternative proposal developed in the focus group discussions was the establishment of a *karma* yoga network aimed to provide a support to the maintenance and development of yoga to the marginalized, in particular to those with addiction issues and in recovery programs, whether these are correctional or medical in nature. This was given strong support by those yoga teachers who could see the value of a network in supporting the work of yoga teachers and assisting in the smooth introduction and running of programs by coordinating and managing liaison with auspicing agencies. In this proposal there is recognition that teaching yoga in this area requires some specific knowledge, motivation and skills and a deeper understanding of the structural deficits that these students face in trying to develop a non-addictive yoga based lifestyle. Further, the organizational environment also presents particular challenges to the yoga teacher, which can be alleviated by a network working to address these issues on a system wide basis. Even something as simple as providing experienced replacement yoga teachers can be arranged more efficiently through a network. It can be commenced

with volunteer resources as it requires very limited capital, (just an internet site), and it brings together the broader yoga community resources and the treatment services to develop improved pathways for marginal clients to embrace existing opportunities in the community. The *karma* yoga network also allows for the accumulation of shared knowledge within the learning group of teachers and students associated with the network.

John stated:

“I think the network idea is really powerful because it gives everyone a central base to come back to. Then if, as a teacher, I’m getting frustrated, I can ring someone and tell him or her. So being part of a group we can help to motivate everyone else. Then you could air some of your findings in the newsletter and people could respond. To raise the consciousness of the group because everyone can discuss what is going on”

Without agency support in the form of funding, special requirements, policy support and good communication etc, the results of introducing yoga are likely to be limited. A yoga network, which distributes testimonials, newsletters and other publicity, can help to create this support amongst managers. It is noteworthy that the U.K. Prison Phoenix Trust met with all prison governors after yoga was accepted as a legitimate training program that they could fund locally.

The effectiveness of a yoga program can be considerably enhanced by a yoga network organization working with the human service organization to plan the implementation of the program, considering all program inputs, processes, outcomes and external factors in the process. One can examine here the efforts that Vipassana take to create a safe and appropriate space and facilities before commencing a program.

We need to perceive the yoga network organization as a mediating structure between the growing yoga community and the addiction recovery-correctional service industry. In this role, it can create a seamless pathway for the interested student from a “seeding once-off class” in a detoxification Unit or jail to a regular weekly subsidized yoga program held in a long term drug

treatment unit or correctional facility, or community based drug counseling agency leading to becoming a committed practitioner at a connected local yoga school and finally to apprentice teaching perhaps in this field. In this process, we have the example of the Phoenix Trust Foundation in the UK in facilitating the delivery of a Yoga Teacher training program for a prisoner through an accredited Yoga school. A network also has the resource potential to mount “special once off events” such as a yoga intensive at a specific facility that could operate every day for one week.

The Inside Yoga, Human Kindness and Phoenix Trust programs are successful in promoting their services as a karmic yoga opportunity for the yoga teacher community. Rather than seeing this work as charity provision, it is an opportunity to really practice your yoga principles and confirm the length and breath of your practice beyond asana to include dialogue with clients via correspondence. A network organization can create a range of opportunities for yoga teachers that allows for those who may choose to create funding for the work, via fund raising, to a yoga teacher offering only one class per year, to more involved commitment and everything in between. The yoga students can also participate in the network and develop community through their participation.

The successful programs have managed to enlist the leadership in yoga and other areas that will ensure that this work receives the same quality of program that external community classes are provided. It would seem that, with the pressure on the public purse, whether the program is based on volunteer or paid teachers, internal or external funding, we need to consider innovative ways in which the programs can be funded and supported. In this context, the accreditation of yoga teaching in this field is definitely worthy of consideration. A yoga network organization could work with similar organizations and interested auspices to develop a sound program infrastructure for the best quality teaching practice.

Personal Reflections on programmatic requirements for yoga to be helpful in addiction recovery

I have seen that the seeding class exposes the new participant to yoga. Yoga is an empowerment strategy that requires agency by the person doing the practice. They may force themselves to do the practice but they cannot be forced by another person or program.

The next stage happens when, at some level, there is a conversion experience where the participant enjoys the practice and wants to continue doing it. During this phase there can be a healthy positive addiction to yoga where the yoga fills the void left by stopping the negative addiction. The yoga teacher plays a significant role in nurturing, leading and guiding the student along the path providing a role model for the participant. The aims are for the yoga practice to become firmly grounded in the participant's daily lifestyle, where practice time is ideally generous, without interruption, punctual and regular. This type of practice provides the potential for transformation from a beginner to a committed yoga practitioner to happen. Multiple techniques in yoga need to be provided to deal with the inevitable obstacles to practice that will occur like illness. The negative addictions or cravings gradually fall away from the dedicated practitioner and the role strain of practicing yoga and relapsing is reduced over time.

I have found yoga builds recovery capital in community, relationships, practices, and an empowered self that nurtures the maintenance stage and eventual ceasing of previous cravings and addictions. Certainly this effort requires time, patience and commitment on the part of both teacher and practitioner. But the effort is well worth it because the confidence built up is transferred into other life areas and life becomes more enjoyable and satisfying.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have reviewed the existing main yoga and meditation programs that operate to assist people in recovery from addictions and in corrections. Work was required to demonstrate the benefits of the approach to

management and direct service staff in the units who may hold views that are not supportive of alternative complimentary therapies like yoga.

There are some unique aspects of teaching yoga and meditation effectively in this field, which the practitioner needs to take account of to ensure the program, is safe and effective. Social control in all its forms pervades the operation of all programs in these areas. The yoga program needs to negotiate program boundaries and develop practice guidelines for all teachers to ensure agency by participants and program and professional integrity is maintained

The importance of engaging participants was stressed and extra dialogue before, during and after class was seen as an effective tool in most cases. The need to prepare the space used for class, to ensure that any medication such as pain killing medication was not used to dull senses, which are our primary defense against injury. The reliability and dependability of the teacher was paramount in gaining the credibility of the programs and providing for conversion experiences where the participant chooses to continue the practice.

Finally, in focus group two, there were mixed views about establishing an ashram as a necessary “immersion in yoga” step for recovery given the considerable resources required and the significant challenges it would face. There was more unanimous support for a network to be created that would draw interested people together to support, train and reimburse yoga teachers for out of pocket expenses and students for their efforts. The karma yoga network concept builds upon existing overseas yoga programs operating in addiction recovery, corrections and with the marginalized. It will provide a bridge between these service areas and the yoga community and opportunities for building an on-line yoga community in this area.

Chapter 7 Conclusions and Recommendations

This research project set out to explore a place for yoga in social work practice to deal with addiction. As I began teaching yoga in addiction recovery, I realized that a key part of this research was the need to understand that, in yoga, the first person that needs to be taught is the teacher. The research journey itself forced me to confront the question of what my experience was in using yoga to deal with my cravings. Through the various research methods and key literature on yoga and transformation, I developed a deeper understanding of the concept of *kriya* yoga as the key to address addiction. *Kriya* yoga involves doing a practice with some intensity and regularity, reflecting on this experience and having some faith in the process. Understanding the stages of addiction recovery helped situate the experience of relapse as a likely expectation in the process of eventual transformation requiring time and commitment by the yoga practitioner.

Yoga created a new element in my identity and the many positive experiences, even blissful ones, helped reinforce my commitment and identity as a yoga person. I was also helped by Jungian theory, which provided a more realistic model of progress through the embracement of the shadow concept and an expanded concept of the self. On occasions, the value and importance of friendship and community was highlighted in my personal experience of dealing with my cravings through yoga. In the research process itself I was assisted through my friendships and the yoga community. Whether via an ashram or network, the crucial role in recovery of community and friendship in recovery needs to be highlighted.

The next question this research set out to answer was: what are the views of yoga teachers and other health professionals working in the addiction recovery about how yoga can assist addicts to overcome addiction. This question required that the definition of what yoga actually stood for be examined. Further, what did “transformation” mean? It was discovered that there were conflicting views amongst yoga practitioners as to the importance

of the bodily practices as the primary tool of transformation. From the focus groups, interviews and literature, it was discovered that a positive addiction period seems common for people with addiction issues who embrace a yoga lifestyle. The example of Phoebe, who had a ten-year heroin addiction and held tight to her ashram lifestyle in recovery is an illustration of this phase. However, it was also very common amongst other yoga teachers and participants in the focus groups and in the literature. Rather than being seen as a negative experience, the positive addiction to yoga was perceived as a necessary part of the yogic journey for some people with cravings or addictions. In addition, I interpreted my craving through the concept of the personal shadow of the yoga practitioner and rather than despising or hiding it, I needed to be non-judgmental and look at the shadow through the eye of contemplation. Otherwise the yogic experience ran the risk of spiritual bypassing or inflation, where the practitioner ignores the negative aspects of their reality. Often that reality was experienced through the various stages of recovery and relapse and return to previous stages before there is a satisfactory withdrawal from the addiction or pre-contemplation stage. This was my experience and it was also reflected in recent phenomenological research on people using yoga in recovery from alcoholism. Yoga and meditation does not provide a guarantee against relapse but it does help to prevent it. The program needs to be available when the participant resumes practice after relapse.

The participants supported the view that transforming an addiction or craving usually involved a long period where the yoga student would experience the contradiction of practicing a positive lifestyle while dealing with the continued negative impacts on their person of the addiction. Gradually yoga promises the disciplined and committed student that addictions will fall away through the continued practice and detachment from the cravings. The degree to which this happens varies across the experiences of participants in this research. My personal experience is that it works and time and persistence is required to make it happen. No empirical evidence was sought in this exploratory study of this phenomena.

The participants expressed the view that yoga normalizes addiction as a feature of our mind-body complex but posits a part of ourselves that is “untouched” by this complex. This notion of our “seer” or true self was experienced by yoga teachers with addiction issues as very empowering and the need to link the practice of yoga to real problem solving was highlighted by the yoga teachers.

Yoga also provided peak experiences or blissful moments which help reinforce commitment to practice. Recovery using yoga as a complementary therapy is not smooth sailing. If the practice is primarily *asana* based, there are likely to be very challenging experiences on a physical level such as minor ailments and even injuries from inappropriate or over-enthusiastic practice.

A range of techniques should be taught to provide for the likely obstacles that are placed in the way of practice.

The primary consensus across all research methodologies used in this thesis was the importance of *kriya* yoga or the yoga of action where a daily practice is embraced and studied with faith in its potential to transform the practitioner.

The second research question asked in the research was: what were the programmatic requirements identified for successful yoga program in the addiction recovery field? The participants expressed the view that addiction recovery and corrections service fields were very challenging service arenas in which to deliver effective yoga and meditation programs. The unifying themes for the current programs that operate are that they are examples of *karma* yoga or the yoga of selfless action. Phoebe, a yoga teacher in the final stages of recovery, spoke about not being ready for “that energy” as the primary reason why she had not taught yoga in addiction recovery centers. Everyone in the focus group understood her fragility and the potential impact on her of the significant problems faced by yoga teachers in addiction recovery services. The yoga teacher must bring to the class an enormous positive energy because of the level of distraction and negative energy that is often felt in these places. *Karma* yoga focuses on the intention and input of the teacher not the outcomes such as how many people participate in the class or what they benefited from. The yoga teacher is the key element of the

program in providing a holding environment or safe space for the students, someone who is dependable and reliable. The challenge of engaging students who were often very distracted or unmotivated and even forced to participate by agency expectations was identified. 'John' spoke about "showing his face" around the unit as a key engagement strategy and the importance of dialogue before, during and after the class was seen as critical to helping the students gain the most benefit from the experience. The yoga teacher also played a significant part in creating agency for participants who were required to participate in the class by the requirements of their involvement in the residential program.

Examination of successful overseas and local programs highlighted the vital importance of management support for the program and the daily help of direct care support staff. Yoga programs often provide direct service staff with yoga lessons partly to win them over but also to help educate the unit more widely. In this field, despite its growing popularity, yoga continues to face a credibility problem with more mainstream interventions. However, there is also some support amongst management and staff particularly from those that perceive the need for addicts to discover a comprehensive replacement lifestyle and yoga does provide one possibility. The challenge, for the marginalized addict, to take this up is significant given that one nurse, who attended a focus group, described leaving a detoxification unit as equivalent to placing a inexperienced tourist "in the middle of Russia". It is highly unlikely that seeding classes alone will produce this result. A more comprehensive program is required.

'Phoebe' used the ashram as a bridging program to be able to take the next step and deal with living a yogic lifestyle in the community and attending yoga schools. Without the bridging program, the gap may be too wide for most people to cross. However, the resources required for an ashram style program are considerable and the policy trend is for addicts to be treated in the community rather than away in some distant place.

Initially the *karma* yoga network concept was seen as primarily a support for isolated teachers in this area. It can provide space for occasional informal gatherings and an on-line facility to inform teachers, provide support and even replacement teachers for when the primary teacher is absent. But it is capable of being much more than this in the form of an on-line community that can support people in recovery who are using yoga as a part of their recovery plan. Some schools of yoga already have a similar concept within their schools but the *karma* yoga network concept would expose students to a range of teaching styles⁵⁷ and range across all schools of yoga. It also allows for the possibility of mounting more substantial once off activities drawing upon the yoga networks. It could also conduct further research in this area and provide organizational support to yoga programs. In this thesis I found support for this emerging concept of the *karma* yoga network in James Barber's progressive model of social work practice where the oppressed person overcomes learned helplessness through repeated interventions, then develops participatory competency which eventually leads to integrity and potentially an activist role in developing community organization. (Barber 1991)

Personal Reflections

Finally, this thesis is also a search to discover a place in social work for yoga. My involvement as a social worker and yoga teacher was about finding a connection between these two professional identities in myself. This thesis became a vehicle through which I was forced to stop teaching yoga in this field and address my own cravings through reflection on the process and determination to see the research through. There is an element of vocation in my endeavour to find a place for yoga in social work and this thesis is partly an exploration of this action. Transpersonal theory provides a justification for the use of yoga in social work as a transformative strategy par excellence (Feuerstein 1996). Addiction tends to delay maturity and yoga can provide a

⁵⁷ The value of having a primary teacher that teaches most classes in one location is still an important for students.

long-term mechanism to develop higher levels of ego maturity. People underestimate the amount of effort and time needed to fully recover from an addiction and relapse is a common experience during the action and maintenance stages of recovery. In these fields social control and paternalism are powerful drivers of policy and I tried to show how important it was for the yoga program to maintain integrity and protect program boundaries and for participant agency to be enhanced in the delivery of a yoga program. The type of yoga practice taught needs to respect the spiritual beliefs of the participants or the absence of them. Bringing a social work perspective to the yoga program challenges the normal maturity levels prevalent in our society that encourages addictions to a range of legal substances and activities. A social work perspective will promote a comprehensive yoga program operating at all levels where there are opportunities for students to critique the institutions of our society that promote harmful products and services and to participate in a supportive alternative lifestyle.

I noted how my yoga practice had contributed to my social work practice in restorative justice and facilitating group conferences. I documented my failures in trying to establish a court-based yoga program and a free yoga program as initiations on my journey of discovery to find a place in social work as a yoga teacher (Progoff 1973). I reflected that these failures forced me to address my own cravings before I could seriously propose yoga in social work practice. In this process, my understanding of yoga broadened, my experience of the journey taken in addiction recovery deepened and my social work perspective reinforced the necessary context required for yoga to thrive in a person's life. Clearly yoga should be evaluated upon whether it provides the addict with assistance to engage with a range of complementary interventions designed to improve a person's life and functioning in the community. From my experience and this research, I think it does this because it makes the addict or person with cravings more disciplined and positive towards life. It can be a useful tool of choice in addiction recovery.

This research was exploratory and based upon a limited number of direct stakeholders in Victoria. Its findings should help to further develop yoga

teaching in addiction recovery and corrections, perhaps through implementation of the karma yoga network. Ultimately whether yoga has a place in my social work practice will depend on how I apply this research in the future.

At a later stage, when the program is in place, research needs to be conducted over a significant period to discover the outcomes for participants and to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of yoga based programs on recidivism and recovery from addiction.

Appendix 1 Glossary of Sanskrit Names used in Thesis

Asana	Bodily postures (third limb of astanga yoga)
Astanga Yoga	Eight limbs of yoga described in yoga sutras
Bhakti yoga	yoga of devotion (usually to God)
Bhavana	Inner attitudes, feelings or reflections
Dharana	Concentration (six limb of astanga yoga)
Dhyana	Meditation (seventh limb of astanga yoga)
Isvara-pranidhanini	Faith and surrender to the practice
Hatha Yoga	Yoga of the body
Jhana Yoga	Yoga of knowledge
Karma Yoga	Selfless Action (without a focus on reward)
Kriya Yoga	Yoga of action
Niyama	Observances in Yoga (second limb of astanga yoga)
Pranayama	Control of breath through exercises (fourth limb of astanga yoga)
Pratyahara	Withdrawal of the senses (fifth limb of astanga yoga)
Samadhi	Direct intuition through contemplation (Eighth limb of astanga yoga)
Samatva	Equanimity
Sanskrit	Ancient language of Indian scriptures
Sangha	A community of practitioners
Sutra	A thread, essential elements or bare bones
Svadhyaya	Self education, self or personal study
Tapas	A burning effort involving determination
Yama	Ethical principles in yoga (first limb of astanga yoga)
Yoga	To join, yoke, concentrate, have union
Yoga Sutras	Yoga aphorisms of Patanjali

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